

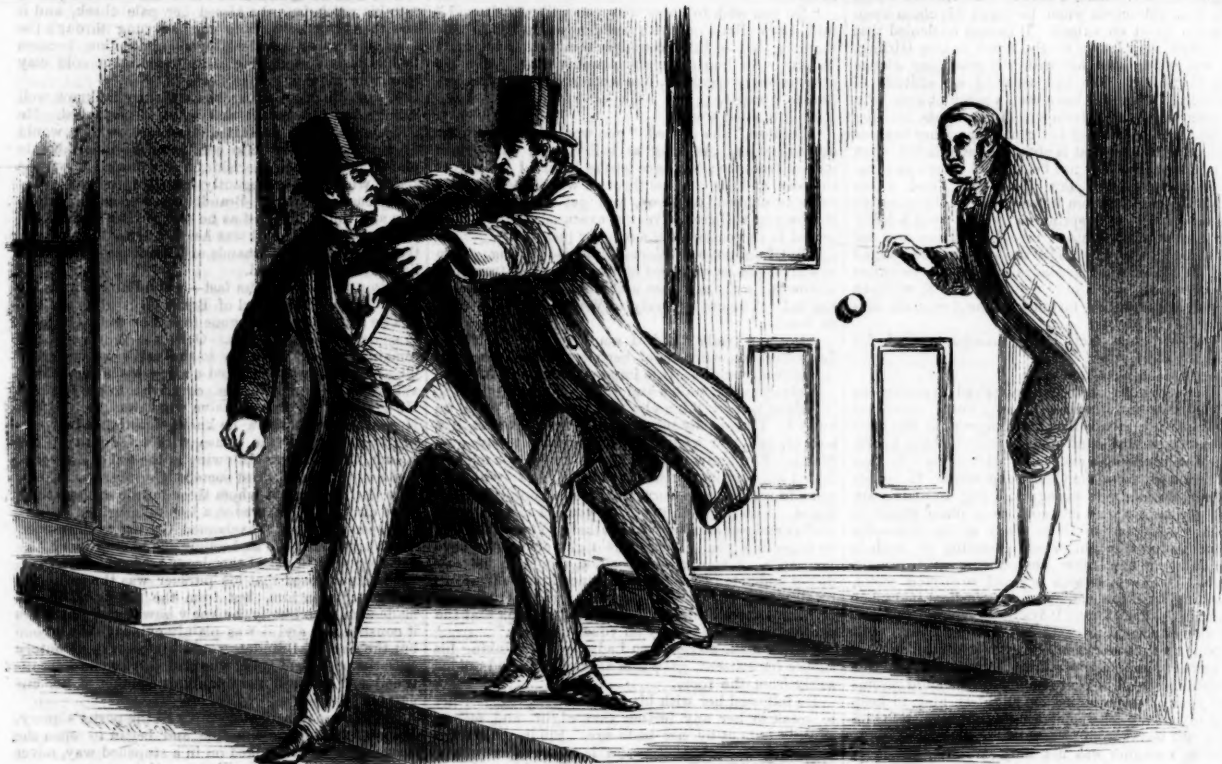
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[THE EARL OF BRANDON TRIES TO PREVENT GIRLING'S ESCAPE.]

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER VII.

Then was I cast out from my state.
A fiend of darkness led my way;
He waked me early, watched me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day.
Oh! I was made his sport, his play
Through many a stormy, troubled year;
And how he used his passive prey,
Is sad to tell.

Græke.

It was a moment of great agitation and terror, but Lady Blanche Brandon felt everything more acutely because her exquisitely nervous nature was excited to its utmost capacity of tension. Her fear was realized. She had been watched, and by her own daring act she had unmasked the intruder on her privacy. He was the last man she had expected to see. She regarded him as if he was some one who had died and been buried, around whose tomb sorrowing relatives had gathered and wept, pouring out their overburdened souls in tears, and for whom a glorious evangel had sounded bringing a resurrection in its wake.

The man whom her ladyship had confronted in so unexpected a manner was William Girling—her dread, her terror, her vampire, who was fattening upon her fears and making money out of her distress. As he stood there behind the curtain whose sheltering folds he had sought for concealment and protection, with a broad grin upon his distended mouth, he appeared like a vengeful mocking demon who was infinitely amused at some fiendish machination of his own, which had been triumphantly successful. Lady Brandon was too much astonished to cry out, and it was not part of her vigorous nature to faint.

She stood a minute silently beholding her enemy and wondering in what manner he had contrived to break through the toils with which she had encompassed him, and effect his escape from the vigilant ward of the merchantman. That he had done so was evident enough. But to discover a fact fraught with such disastrous results to herself at such a critical juncture,

just after the committal of a crime of a terrible and heinous nature, was enough to overturn a stronger equilibrium than her ladyship's. It was reserved for Girling to break the silence which reigned with such solemn profundity. He took her by the hand and led her into the middle of the apartment near to where her victim was reclining in a listless attitude, graceful though listless, and not at first sight indicative of death.

The guilty woman attempted no opposition to the familiarity upon which Girling had ventured. Yet though she was quiescent her brain was busy. She knew well enough that she could be crushed, utterly, completely. If she could charm the snake by the melody of her voice, its grasp might relax and she render him harmless. So she thought, and plotted, and schemed.

She did not look as if she were conspiring. She was pale and harassed as to her face; her disengaged hand hung listlessly by her side, and her downcast eyes sought the ground as if she was conscious of having committed some crime which was calculated to inspire those acquainted with the fact, with the utmost horror; and if there is one crime which deserves reprobation, loathing, detestation, punishment, severe and summary, it is murder. It is so final. It gives the one whose career is suddenly checked no chance. He is gone, launched into eternity with all his sins upon his head unrepented of. There is much to be said in favour of the Mosaic law, blood for blood. But when a murder is committed coldly and deliberately with care, judgment and forethought, its criminality is aggravated a thousand degrees.

Girling could not help feeling as if he was playing with an edged tool when he held Lady Blanche Brandon by the hand. When he had followed her into the apartments of the countess, he had no idea of what he was about to witness. This highly, well-born, richly endowed woman was like a rosebud; beneath the sun of Girling's acquaintance she was gradually unfolding. In having anything at all to do with her, he knew that he was standing on the edge of a precipice, but he did not care for that. He was a desperate man and could not afford to stick at trifles.

His army career, his degradation and dismissal from the ranks had made him what he was, and although at present he shrank from the crimes of which her ladyship was guilty, he was not very scrupulous. He wanted money. He had it, as it were, within his grasp, and he was not going to relinquish his chance through a pusillanimous feeling.

Now he understood her ladyship so well, he determined that it should be a conflict of wits, a battle of brains; the cleverest should win, and he had so much confidence in himself, that he did not indulge many doubts as to the issue of the intellectual combat in which he was about to embark.

There was something exciting and exhilarating about this warfare; the very thought of it made him experience sensations similar to those felt by a young and raw recruit who finds himself under fire for the first time. At first he is timid, shrinking, alarmed and fearful. Presently, his blood courses at a quicker rate through his veins, and he is sublimated. The iron hail crashes and flies around him. The roar and the din of battle defends him. An utter disregard to personal danger takes possession of him, and he kills his fellow-creatures with a deadly aim.

Lady Brandon was one of those privileged beings who constitute an upper ten thousand, or perhaps more in this country, the uppermost layer of our aristocratic strata. Hereditary birth and wealth were hers, and there was a charm about her, a nameless grace, a wonderful fascination that attracted you to her at once. It is an extraordinary thing, but some women possess this faculty in a marked degree.

The effect of her manner upon Girling was more striking because he had never been accustomed to speak to or associate with ladies of high rank and exalted social position. I have alluded already to her ladyship's fertility of conception, and it now stood her in good stead. She devised a plan worthy of her evil intellect.

Lady Blanche Brandon determined, with all the consummate assurance and impudence of which she was so accomplished a mistress, to reduce William Girling to a state of subjection; he had made himself so formidable and so dangerous to her, that it

was imperatively necessary she should do something to rescue herself from the unpleasant and perilous position in which she was now placed. What weapon was there so efficacious as love? She would, at all events, try the effect of her blandishments upon him. How sweet would be the triumph if she could see him at her feet supplicating her for a reciprocation of an attachment which could never be sympathized with, because she loved another. This was a way to humble his pride and lower his pretensions. This would amply reward her for all the insults he had heaped upon her; and this would establish a counter-check which would prove most efficacious when he urged his claim upon her to too great an extent. It cannot be denied that she looked very lovely as she stood before Girling, who was gazing upon her with the searching glance of an inquisitor. She had assumed an attitude of contrition. She might have been a penitent nun, who had been unable to restrain worldly thoughts, bending low for the absolution of her confessor, rather anxious about the penance that is about to be inflicted upon her, but hoping it may not be quite as severe as sister So-and-so, received a few days back, and which startled the convent from its propriety by its excessive harshness. In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, but Girling was far from being in any way under the sway of the winged god. He looked upon her ladyship, as an exhaustless mine of wealth, which only required careful working to yield an immense fortune to the fortunate discoverer.

With her usual tact, Lady Brandon waited for Girling to address her.

He spoke at length, and said:

"I suppose your ladyship is surprised at seeing me at such a time and in such a place; but I succeeded in making my escape from the captain of the merchantman to whose kind offices your faithful negro, Zanzebar, consigned me. And with regard to that amiable black, allow me to say one word. If he attempts to meddle with me again, I beg to state I am fully prepared to send his soul to a place which is popularly supposed to be as black as his skin—the region of eternal night, where gnashing of teeth is more in vogue than other amusements of a diverse nature. I am armed with a small revolving pistol, containing six chambers. It is of excellent manufacture, and worthy of your ladyship's favourable notice, only as we have other affairs in hand just now, I will postpone the consideration of my firearm until another and more favourable opportunity. But if you take this delectable negro into your confidence, I should recommend your giving him just the slightest hint to keep out of my way, or else something might happen to him which will be far from pleasant."

Girling's manner was not only sarcastic, but insolent and defiant.

Her ladyship simulated a cringing attitude, as if deprecating any abuse or reproach. He imagined this to be a token of defeat. Clever as he was, he was not a match for Lady Brandon.

"Perhaps, Lady Brandon," he continued, "you wonder how I obtained admittance to your private apartments. Shall I tell you?"

Lady Brandon bowed her head. As yet she had not thought it advisable to speak. She contented herself with allowing the long lashes which fringed her speaking eyes to fall down and nearly conceal them; but like the Florentine ladies who once possessed the power of intrigue beyond all others of their sex, she could see through the silken covering, although Girling was not aware of the fact.

"Your plans for my incarceration," he said, "were, as you now know, rendered futile by my superior sagacity. This time I have beaten you, as I shall do again, should you another time object to the power I have established over you. If you had treated me well, I should have been the most submissive of your servants; but now I am determined to show you that, in spite of your rank, your money, and your position, I am your master. I thought that it would be better to pay you a visit at night. Accordingly, I waited until nightfall, and then knocked at the door of your house. The porter knew me: he had often seen me here before, and told me I should either find you in your own apartments, or in those of the countess."

As he mentioned the name of the unhappy peeress, her ladyship shuddered.

It is not in human nature to be in the same room with some one you have killed, and not feel a retributive shiver—an atomic fragment of the vengeance which even-handed justice holds ready to hurl at your devoted head, when supreme wisdom shall dictate.

William Girling proceeded, in his flippant way:

"By wandering through the corridors, I met a servant, who instructed me in what direction the apartments of the Countess of Brandon were. I succeeded in effecting my entry, without your being aware of the fact, and, thanks to my skill and good management, I have discovered another secret, which places you more than ever in my power. If you dare to disobey one of

my commands—I will no longer call them requests—I can hand you over to the common hangman, who, in the name of the law, will break your fragile neck, and add another illustrious name to the already swollen pages of the "Newgate Calendar."

"You will not do that?" exclaimed Lady Blanche Brandon, in piteous accents, clasping her hands together, and looking up imploringly in his stern and inflexible countenance.

"No; I do not say that I shall. I merely assert what I can do should you offend me, and compel me to do so."

"Do you wish to know why you will not do so?" said Lady Brandon with sudden animation. She thought that a little confidence might have more weight with him than abject submission. Men do not, generally speaking, like women who too much resemble spaniels.

He intimated assent.

"Because," she replied, "you would be killing your golden goose. As long as I live, you can obtain money from me; but once let me be dead or out of the way, and the channel through which the supplies come is choked, dried up, you get nothing. That is why you will not have me executed, as you suggested in so gentlemanly a manner just now."

"But I am not a gentleman," replied Girling. "So you must not be surprised at what you hear from me, although I must say, that nothing I say to you can be too bad. You are as lovely as Venus, but as wicked as Jezebel."

"Do you really think I am lovely?" exclaimed Lady Brandon with one of her most winning smiles.

"Indeed you are. It is impossible to deny it."

Lady Brandon smiled and said:

"Have you anything else to say to me? Can I go away? You are my master, so I suppose I must, like a slave, ask you whether I may return to my own rooms. You know everything, so I need not tell you that I am running a risk by staying here; will you come to me again to-morrow? I shall not leave the house. I do not wish to escape you. I think we can understand one another without that. Your wife must be expecting you. It is quite right of you to love your wife. A man in your position should do so. You do not understand the graces of educational refinement, by all means go home to your wife, and the enjoyment of your domestic felicity. I am glad to think that the conjugal yoke sits lightly on your shoulders."

Girling made no reply, so Lady Brandon, taking his silence for consent, gave him an arch look and glided softly from the room.

He followed her with his eyes, thinking it better not to speak to her any further that night, and feeling slightly put out by her badinage. Finding that she had gone, he thought it advisable to beat a retreat as well. He had his hat on, and he felt in his pocket to see that the small phial of poison was safely deposited there. There was the chance of his being arrested as the murderer of the Countess of Brandon.

If any one came into the room and found him there, suspicion would at once attach itself to him; so, in the same stealthy way that Lady Brandon had employed, he crept from the room, leaving the lamp burning, and entered the passage.

He had not, however, progressed far up the corridor, before he heard some one approaching him. It was impossible to escape, so, although in great trepidation, Girling continued his way in as unconcerned a manner as he could assume.

There were small oil lamps placed on brackets at a distance of about twelve feet apart. These gave a slender light, such as a single wax-taper on a Roman Catholic shrine might emit; but it enabled you to find your way without tripping up over the carpet, or breaking your shins against an occasional chair.

The man who was nearing Girling, was of a tall and commanding figure, his back was a little bent, as if he applied himself over-much to study and hard work, or as if he had led a hard life in his youth, for dissipation and extreme hard work generally produce the same results.

This was the Earl of Brandon; he had just left the House of Lords, and after making a speech which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be described as brilliant, had returned home to pet and cherish the wife who he hoped would soon get over the loss of her child, and be restored to her former health. When he saw Girling, the earl looked at him and exclaimed:

"Who are you, sir?"

He could not take him for one of the servants of the house, because he was not dressed in the Brandon livery; had he been, the earl would have passed him without a look or a word.

Girling's invention was taxed rather severely. He did not know what to say. He murmured something about being a tradesman's assistant, and having brought some shawls for the countess to see.

On hearing this explanation, the Earl of Brandon gave him a supercilious nod and passed on.

Girling hastened along the lengthy corridor, wish-

ing to get into the street as soon as he could. He reached the top of the staircase, and was descending it with rapidity, when a terrible cry burst upon his ears. It reverberated through the passages and found an echo in every angle. It was the Earl of Brandon uttering a lament for his dead wife. He had come upon her in the stillness of the night. Seeing her lying back in an arm-chair he fancied her to be asleep. A gentle shake of the arm, a soft caress, all of no use—of no efficacy. Then came bawling, amazement, fear and terror.

The Earl of Brandon stood astounded. He peered into his wife's face, he kissed her pale cheek, and it was then that the terrible cry had rung through the house. He was horrified beyond conception, because he had kissed something more resembling cold clay than warm, quick human flesh.

When William Girling heard the cry he knew well enough what it meant and what it portended. He had to anticipate pursuit and capture, which would overturn and throw into confusion all the elaborate plans he had been cherishing. He leaped down the stairs, which were elegantly carpeted, as was every conspicuous part of Brandon house, taking them two at a time; but just as he reached the bottom, the harsh voice of the earl was heard resounding through the hall, uttering commands of fearful import to William Girling, if obeyed.

"Stop him—hold him fast—a thousand pounds for him!" shouted the Earl of Brandon.

The servants had all gone to bed or were occupied in some way below stairs. Only the drowsy porter remained to pay attention to the earl's furious cries. The latter individual started up from his hooded chair, and, after rubbing his eyes, contrived to see Girling. He could not at first conceive what was the matter. Here was a man whom he knew slightly, endeavouring to get out of the house with all celerity. His master, the earl, was bellowing at the top of his voice, and telling him to arrest somebody's progress. Could it be Girling against whom these hostile exclamations were directed? He was at a loss to imagine.

"Open the door!" exclaimed Girling to the porter.

"Don't you hear the earl telling me to stop him?"

"Stop who?" asked the sleepy porter.

Girling guessed that his pursuer was the earl. He had never seen him, but from the inquiries he had made about the family he knew how many members it consisted of, and it was plainly evident that no one but the Earl of Brandon would make such an outcry over the poor dead lady, who had just come to an untimely end through the iniquitous conduct of her unnatural relation.

Feeling too impatient to reply to the porter's query, he pushed him on one side and began to open the door. The porter looked on in a stupefied way, never offering to interfere or exert himself in any way.

Just as Girling had succeeded in effecting his object, the earl reached the end of the grand staircase with a bound, and, with a few rapid strides, overtook Girling and caught him in a firm grasp, as he was about to descend the steps of the mansion.

CHAPTER VIII

Lo! the green serpent from his dark abode,
Which even imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth issuing gathers up his train
In orbs immense, then darting out anew,
Seeks the refreshing fount, by which diffused,
He throws his folds, and while with threatening tongue
And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls
His flaming crest.
But still more direful
The small close lurking minister of fate,
Whose high concocted venom through the veins
A rapid lightning darts, arresting swift
The vital current.

Thomson.

GIRLING, on finding himself seized, made one of those desperate efforts of which only men in great extremity, such as escaped convicts with the police at their heels, are capable. Fortunately for him it was successful. He shook off the earl and darted rapidly up the street. His circumstances were so altered now that he was able to take a cab, and, as may be imagined, he no longer resided in Tiger Bay. The earliest opportunity that presented itself was seized, and a removal effected to a more aristocratic part of the town.

The Girlings now occupied a floor in Spring Gardens. He found his wife waiting up for him, and not in the best of tempers. It is one of the weaknesses and the privileges of women to be cross occasionally. I will not go so far as to say that Mrs. Girling often indulged in such freaks of fancy, but on this particular occasion she received her husband in any but a polite manner. It so happened that Girling was irritable, and not in the humour to put up with his wife's angry exclamations. She asked him where he had been in an acrimonious tone of voice, accompanied by a look which resembled essence of vinegar, so harsh and unpleasant was it. The acidity that she threw into the conversation imparted itself to him, and he

told her that if she wished very much to know where he had been to, she might take the trouble to find out; but that, as far as he was concerned, he would not give her the slightest information about the matter.

At this reply Mrs. Girling began to talk very loudly, and to upbraid her husband with imaginary crimes, which was a reprehensible proceeding on her part. She culminated her verbal efforts by reminding him of what took place at Chatham, and asked him how he liked being drummed out of the regiment. This taunt exasperated him almost beyond endurance. He considered, and with some show of justice, that it was not only unkind and ungenerous of his wife to remind him of such bygones, but cowardly and vindictive. For some minutes they hurled elegant invectives at one another, and then Mary sat down upon a chair and began to cry. The stolen child, reclining in a small cot bought on purpose for it, joined in the lachrymose demonstration, and a most charming concert was at once extemporized.

This, of course, did not improve Girling's state of mind. He also took a seat, and nursed one of his knees, from doing which he seemed to derive considerable satisfaction. Mary bit her lip and jerked her foot up and down in an agitated way. This indicated that she was very much put out. Once more she demanded the information which he had just before refused to supply her with. He declined to give her the slightest clue to his movements, and Mrs. Girling became more exasperated than ever. There are very few women who are improved by the facial development which passion occasions. Certainly Mary was not one of the select few. An angry wife, who becomes oblivious of her duty and position, is a sorry spectacle, and the veil should be drawn over a repulsive exhibition.

Girling was not the man to treat a woman badly. On the contrary, he was one of those who will do a great deal and go a long way to bring a flush to the pale cheek and a smile to the fixed lips. Mary had been kind to him in the days of adversity, but prosperity had altered her—shall I say spoiled her? If I do, it will not be an exaggeration. She was no longer the woman she used to be. She had a comfortable home, and everything that she could reasonably wish for; but she grew exacting, and thought her husband should be always with her. She had only enjoyed these unwonted luxuries a few days, but they turned her head. She never imagined that Girling was obliged to scheme, and plot, and work, and slave to obtain the money that gave her the means of living in idleness.

Mary would not think of that. She only knew that she had the children to look after, and the strange baby that he had brought home on the second day after their arrival in London.

To wish for a husband's society at all times is natural and proper, but to express that wish when you know that he has a thousand little things to look after, is unwise. It is sure to lead to serious misunderstandings and quarrels and odious recriminations. In such a case a man will sicken of his home, and wish himself a hundred miles away.

William Girling thought of Lady Blanche Brandon. His wife, by her querulousness and her bickering, drove him to it. He recalled her tender manner and the half-affectionate way in which she had looked at him. The questions she had asked him about his wife also came into his mind; and as the natural result of all this train of thought, he drew a comparison, or rather tried to draw one, between his wife and Lady Brandon.

Although it should not have been, the result was in favour of her ladyship. She possessed more personal beauty, more attractiveness of manner, and an indescribable something which made her more striking than simple-minded Mary Girling.

He thought that her ladyship made something like overtures to him in the apartment when he had surprised her after the murder of the Countess of Brandon. He speculated at random, he gave his imagination the rein, and like a mettlesome horse, it ran away with him. When his wife said trying, annoying, worrying things to him, he felt that he could run away from his home and commit bigamy for her sake. This was all brought about through Mary happening to be in a bad temper when he came home. She made some remark rather less amiable than usual, probably owing to his not petting her when she was crying, for all women expect that a flood of tears will reduce the enemy to subjection, and bring him once more to his proper allegiance.

"If you are not a little more agreeable," said Girling, "I shall leave you to yourself."

"You can if you like," she replied. Perhaps you would like to go back to the friends you have just left. If you wish it, do so by all means."

Girling looked at his wife steadily for a moment, but she met his gaze and returned it undimly. His only reply to her remark was to put on his hat and walk very composedly out of the room.

Mary followed him to the door, and then she stopped. His manner was so hard and cold that she did not like to go after him any further. She waited, thinking he would come back—that he had only done it to frighten her; but presently the front door slammed, and then she knew that he was indeed gone.

Gone! and where? That was more than she could tell. She was little aware that she had, by her unpremeditated burst of temper, alienated her husband's affections from her and created a gulf which she would find it impossible in the future to bridge over.

It was no use running after him with the remote prospect of overtaking him at the corner of the street. She had the children to mind. So she began to cry afresh, and wondered what she had done that she should be treated so cruelly. She had not done very much. Her offence was not punishable by the law of the land, yet she had lost her husband through it.

Mary Girling waited up for a long, weary time. The hours seemed to drag themselves along with an irritating slowness.

Three o'clock struck, and the baby began to cry. The tinkling bell of the time-piece had awakened it from its slumbers. She rocked the cradle to and fro, and tried to sing a song to send it to sleep again, but the lullaby would not shape itself into the soothing sounds of which it was ordinarily composed. She was miserable and faint-hearted. A sense of coming evil stole over her.

Now, in her calm moments, she regretted her violence, and wished that she had received her husband with her accustomed meekness and humility; but like all regrets, hers came too late. She would have given anything in the world to have had him near her, in the same room with her, sitting by her side.

But William Girling was far away. He had money in his pocket. He was independent. He did not care for anybody. He was no longer a private soldier; and the provost-marshal was an individual to be laughed at. Still there was that indelible brand, the fatal letter D, and he winced as he thought of it.

He went to an hotel in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and he did not venture a thought upon his unhappy wife indulging her melancholy in solitary misery.

She had sought a quarrel with him, the result of which was that he had been driven out of the house and compelled to go elsewhere, and it was twenty to one if he ever returned home again.

Mary Girling had a powerful rival in the person of Lady Brandon, and she had, by her own stupidity and ill-temper, created this rival. By behaving in the way she had done she had given a bias to her husband's thoughts which fixed them upon her ladyship. It is just such accidents as these which change the whole current of human affairs and turn it into a fresh and utterly different course. Trifles are very often not only the source of all good, but the root of all evil. The quarrel between the Girlings was trifling enough, but its results were to be of great moment to more personages than one who are celebrated in this history.

The market, as he passed through it, was just beginning to show symptoms of animation. Huge waggons, heavily laden, were labouring their way into the avenue that led to their destination. These wains had come from Fulham, Hammersmith, and the other market-gardens in and about London. Their freight was valuable, and soon bought up by the enterprising speculators who hold stalls in the market. After amusing himself for a brief space by standing before St. Paul's Church and watching the bargains that were made, he traversed the colonnade and sought the hotel in which he intended to sleep. St. Paul's, Covent Garden, was nothing to him, but to the man who delights in associations, it always brings back the days when it was the resort of fashionable people, when beaux made appointments with those women whose pretty faces took their fancy; when hymn-books were used as a screen for flirting and lovemaking. Fancy, now-a-days, St. Paul's, the obscure church in Covent Garden, whom nobody knows and nobody goes to, being once upon a time—always an indefinite period—the resort of those who led the fashion and drew the town after them. Certainly, times change, and we change with them. Perhaps this is the truest axiom that was ever propagated by mortal man.

Girling found no difficulty in finding a bed. He was prepared to pay for the accommodation; his appearance was indicative of money, and, consequently, those who represented the proprietors of the hotel trusted him to the extent of the few shillings which they in their generosity charged for the accommodation he wanted. As he turned into bed and covered himself with the spotless sheets and the equally white counterpane, he admitted the demon of ambition into his confidence, and allowed his mind to cherish and foster the germ of projects of which the end was

dubious. His wife's reproaches and Lady Blanche Brandon's blandishments had turned his head. He was a clever man, but he did not see that her ladyship was making fun of him—leading him on, and trying for purposes of her own to make him her slave. He had committed the fatal mistake of comparing his wife with her, and he was destined some day to discover the lamentable error into which he had fallen.

William Girling fancied his wife dead and himself the husband of Lady Brandon. He knew that he had firmly established a bondage over her, but he was not as yet aware of the bondage which she had succeeded in establishing over him. When the morning broke and the day dawned he had his breakfast, and considered what it was best for him to do. He turned over various plans of action in his mind, and at last determined to pay a visit to Lady Brandon. He was sufficiently intimate with her to be able to pay her a morning call. If he sent in his name he was sure he would not be refused an audience. So he started upon his journey. I cannot say that he did not think of his wife, but he thought of her, when he did condescend to notice her, as a disagreeable woman, the principal business of whose life was to worry and annoy him. The more he thought of her the more he disliked her. When he reached Brandon House he was told that her ladyship was out, but he could wait if he liked. His friend, the hall-porter, asked him why the earl endeavoured to stop him on the previous evening. Girling made some specious excuse which satisfied his interrogator, and he was conducted, as he had been before, into the waiting-room set apart for visitors who were not of the equestrian order.

Girling had expected a different reception. He had imagined that he should be driven away from the door or taken into custody, or that something dreadful would happen to him; but he relied upon Lady Brandon to deliver him, and so he boldly made the venture. He had made up his mind that if he was accused, he would threaten Lady Blanche Brandon, and denounce her as the actual murderer of the countess. He supposed that her ladyship had gone out for a drive, in order to rid herself of the terrible reflections with which she could not help being haunted in the house in which her sister-in-law had died by her hand. After waiting for about half-an-hour, Girling was summoned by a footman to her ladyship's apartments.

Lady Blanche was standing by one of the windows in the drawing-room in which Girling had first seen her. She had not taken off her bonnet and shawl yet; and Girling thought that, if possible, she looked more ethereal and prettier dressed than when she was in her ordinary morning costume. She wore a bonnet made of light blue silk, quilted; her dress matched it, made of watered silk, the rich more hung in graceful folds around her, and gave her a queenlike grace and dignity; her gloves were lavender coloured and sewn with black; her shawl was equally beautiful. It was constructed of the richest black lace, and so fine was its texture that it served to set off her exquisitely rounded form. Like a butterfly, she appeared so airy, light, and fairy-like, that the least touch would bring about her destruction.

Poor Girling felt when in her presence like a man who has no will of his own, whose only longing is to fall down and worship what he imagines to be the loveliest of created beings. Like a moth was he fluttering around a candle. Now circling and gyrating so near the yellow flame that the lambent fire almost licks it into its consuming embrace, a moment afterwards with rash daring, tempting its fate, and falling scorched, charred, and burnt, a helpless, wingless, dying thing, upon the senseless metal that forms the candlestick.

Lady Blanche Brandon held out her hand.

Girling advanced, stumbling at every step like a schoolboy. He was almost afraid to press those taper fingers and take that tiny hand within his own. She smiled upon him with all the grace of which she was capable, and told him she was glad to see him.

"I did not wait to take my things off," she exclaimed, "because they told me you were waiting to see me, and as you had already been kept some time in that disagreeable room down-stairs, I thought I would take pity upon you and have you shown up at once. It is so tedious to wait. Nothing worries me so much as waiting. That is the worst of going to court. You are knocked about and obliged to be in attendance until these who are before you have kissed hands."

Girling knew nothing about going to court, but the declaration impressed him. He could not even boast of having a relation a beefeater, which would have been a palliating circumstance in his favour, for the members of that enterprising corps are supposed to be the guard of her most gracious Majesty on state occasions, although to look at them when at the Tower you would not think them capable of doing much execution.

Lady Blanche took off her bonnet and threw it on a sofa, telling Girling to seat himself. In his agita-

tion he very nearly sat down upon the article of dress of which she had just divested herself. Fortunately he discovered the error he was about to commit in time, and removed himself to a distance from the fragile thing he was so nearly destroying.

Lady Brandon laughed musically and said, "Do not sit down on my bonnet. It has done nothing to deserve crushing. It only came home last night, and I like it. I think it very pretty."

Girling replied that he thought so too. After which very entertaining and profound remark, he began to play with his hat as if there was something the matter with the brim, and it was incumbent upon him to turn it over in some way so as to hide the defect and shield it from observation.

The fact was, Girling was falling in love, and he did not know how to be awkward enough. Her ladyship observed this, and noticed the alteration in his manner with great but silent satisfaction. It was indeed a subject for congratulation with her to think that she had subdued and conquered the man who the day before was an inexorable avenger.

She did not understand that sometimes love turns to hatred. She was placing herself in a most equivocal position. She could not return Girling's passion, for the existence of which she alone was answerable. She had done all that lay in her power to conjure it up and bring the man to her feet, and Girling, simple fellow, thought that there was sincerity about her manner, when it was all along as false and unsubstantial as the simulated passion of a clever actor who, upon the stage, moves you to tears one moment, and makes you laugh the next. She was a hollow-hearted, designing woman, and it would have been much better for him had he known it.

The attractiveness and the charm of this terrible woman was turning his head.

As for her, she imagined that she could keep him dangling about her, a weak, passive slave, for an eternity, or until she could marry Sir Lawrence Allingford, and in some manner dispose of the silly fool who had been simple enough to suppose that she could love him. She would have hated him, had she not thought him too insignificant.

He was acquainted with two of her secrets, both of which she wished, above all things, to be kept inviolate; but she considered herself more skillful than he, and entertained no doubt whatever that she should be able to defeat him in the long run.

"Will you have some wine?" asked Lady Brandon. "If so, may I trouble you to ring the bell?"

Girling arose instantly, and did as she requested him. To obey her was now a pleasure.

It was a pretty picture; but like the mirage, it possessed no reality. It was rather too grand and alluring to be possible of fruition.

Had not his wife treated him as she had done, things might have been very different; but she had, in a certain manner, driven him away from his home, and he then indulged the wild visions and impracticable schemes which were to prove so disastrous to him. But in his present state, he would have sacrificed fifty wives in order to gain the love of Lady Brandon. She was reversing the late order of things. Instead of his holding her in bondage, she had the whip-hand, and he was becoming her servant.

William Girling, than whom an honest man some time ago never breathed, and who would have shrunk from the commission of a crime, now began to speculate as to the chances and means of getting rid of his wife, and to blame himself for ever having loaded his shoulders with such an incumbrance.

When the servant answered the bell, Lady Brandon, in her usual melodious tone, told him to bring some wine.

She could not help speaking in a voice like a bell—it was natural to her; but when addressing a domestic, her manner was cold, haughty, and distant. She spoke to those beneath her as she would to a dog, treating them as if they were inferior animals, and did not belong to the same class and species as herself.

She was obliged to be civil to Girling because she was in his power. If she had not been, she would not have wasted a word upon him, although his manner and bearing were much superior to the usual run of people in his position.

When he had imbibed a glass or two of wine he became bolder, and thought it was a good and favourable opportunity for, in a delicate manner, breaking the ground to her ladyship, so he exclaimed:

"I am surprised that any one so charming as yourself should remain unmarried. One would imagine that half the men in London would be happy to call you their wife."

As he uttered the word marry, a scathing flash of indignation left her ladyship's eyes. Her look was enough to wither William Girling up, but he did not notice this ebullition of temper. His eyes were fixed upon the ground, and the curl of the lip, denoting unutterable scorn, was also lost upon him. Like a fool,

he had rushed in where an angel would have hesitated to tread; but as he was just at present living in a fool's paradise, he was not aware of the act of stultification of which he had been guilty.

Lady Brandon was herself startled. She had thought that the man would have been content with the privilege of loving and worshipping her at a distance. She never imagined for an instant that he would be so bold as to contemplate anything nearer or dearer. She was in a dilemma, and how to issue from it she did not know. She felt inclined to smile; for the idea of marrying William Girling was to her supremely absurd, yet she had herself alone to blame for the ambitious thoughts which were evidently coming rapidly to maturity in his fostering brain. She resolved to temporize, saying:

"I daresay I shall marry some day, but it will not be for a long time yet. I am fond of my liberty, and you, of course, know that a woman renounces that when she promises to obey her husband. But let us talk about business. Are you in want of money again? If so, you can have it."

"Thank you," replied Girling, "I do not care about it now."

"Have you anything else to say to me, then? Because, if you have not, I will run away from you. They will be waiting lunch for me down-stairs."

"Before you go, I have something I should like to say to you."

Lady Brandon looked a little uneasy, but she replied:

"By all means!"

Girling's manner was perplexed and embarrassed. Was he about to play a prominent part in an exciting scene in an amorous drama? Was it his intention to act the part of a devoted Romeo to an unwilling Juliet? It was clear that Lady Brandon thought so, for a shade of displeasure crossed her face, and she felt more than ever impatient of her galling bondage.

(To be continued.)

THE PROPHETESS OF LANGUEDOC.

CHAPTER I.

THE moon had gone down behind the far-off Pyrenees, but the light of the watch-fire still shone red and warm over the encampment of a band of wandering vintagers, who had bivouached for the night where the vines hung heavy with purple clusters, rich with the best wines of France.

Crouched in various attitudes upon the grass, they presented a striking and picturesque scene—just such a scene as you have witnessed when you have stolen through the dusk to catch a glimpse, mayhap, of the gipsy forge-fires burning beyond the walls of Grenada, the dark-browed men at their toil, the women chattering like blackbirds in their wild, Romany dialect, and young girls and children gliding through the mazes of some dreamy, Eastern dance.

Our vintagers had the same nut-brown complexion, the same dusky eyes, the same elf-locks, and many of the Zingali habits also. Like them they had their chief, their rules when on the march and in the camp, and their thirst for gain, their craft, and their deceit. Some had once kept flocks in the solemn wastes of the Landes; some dwelt on the moors of Brittany, and some had come from the streets of Paris and Lyons, to keep grim Want away.

But there was one among them who formed a vivid contrast to her companions and surroundings; tall, slender and graceful, fair-browed, blue-eyed, and golden-tressed, with a cheek blushing like a rich apricot, Heloise was the wonder of all whom they met in their travels, and the especial admiration of the young vintagers not yet blessed with a sweetheart.

On the night when our story opens, the musician of the band had produced a flageolet, and as he struck up a merry air, a dozen girls started from the green sward and went pirouetting through the measures of an old-fashioned dance. They were joined by an equal number from the motley throng of men smoking round the fire, and the chief himself, a person of stalwart form and spirited face.

"Where is Heloise?" he asked, as he glanced along the gay ranks.

"She is not here!" cried Janette Dupre; "she never wants to be in our sports of late." And she shrugged her shoulders most expressively.

"Call her," said the chief, and the night rang with shouts of—

"Heloise! Heloise!"

There was no reply, and the leader continued:

"Hold, hold! I'll go and seek her!"

A significant smile parted Janette's lips, and was reflected on the faces of the group, as Basil Duchene walked away. In a few minutes he came back alone, exclaiming:

"Strange, strange! I have searched the whole encampment, and cannot find Heloise. If anybody

knows where she's gone, let him speak; but hark ye, no gossip."

Janette tossed her head with a vehemence that made her flagree ear-drops quiver, but she was silent, save that her look and manner told more than words could have spoken. The chief hesitated an instant, and then, as if obeying a second and wiser thought, said:

"Well, since none of you answer, we'll drop the subject, and go on with our merry-making. Janette, give me your hand in the next dance."

The girl gave a ready assent, and when the set was over, he drew her somewhat apart from the rest, and exclaimed in a tone scarcely above a whisper:

"Janette, what did you mean just now, when you declared Heloise had lost her relish for our sports?"

The girl's cheek reddened, and her black eyes flashed angrily, as she rejoined:

"What I said, Basil Duchene! and again there was a defiant toss of the head and twinkle of the long ear-drops, gleaming like gilded circles in the fire-light.

"And do you know what has caused the change, or where she is to-night, when she ought to be safe in the encampment?"

"Yes," was the low response, and Janette's brown fingers worked nervously at the lacings of her red bodice.

"Then why don't you speak?"

"Oh,"—and Janette put on a pretty air of regret—"it isn't in me to wish to be hard on a poor girl."

The young man's brow knit fiercely, and his broad chest heaved as he continued:

"Janette Dupre, remember, there can be no trifling with the chief of the band; tell me the whole truth."

"*Eh bien*," began the maiden, "this is not the first time that Heloise has been absent from the camp since we have been at work in the Riviere vineyards. She has found a new lover, Basil, and thrice within the last week they have met."

"A new lover!" cried Duchene, with a start; "who may he be, prithee?"

"None of your low-born vintagers," replied the girl. "Ma'mselle Heloise looks higher than that."

"Impossible!" muttered the chief between his teeth.

"*Ma foi*, 'tis a fact, nevertheless."

"Who is it then?—one of the soldiers who have pitched their tents a league or two yonder?"

"No, no."

"Speak out, girl; you madden me!"

Janette lifted her hand and pointed to a château a mile distant from the encampment—a grand château, situated on a bold hill, and with its grey turrets cutting sharply against the dim blue of the night sky.

"The nobleman who owns this old château, and these broad grounds, has been ill, and so has come down to recruit on his estates in the country. Of course he could not get on without a love-affair to while away his time, and professes to be desperately smitten with Heloise."

"And where did he meet her?"

"Why, he rode to the vineyards, and saw Heloise gathering grapes. He inquired of the steward who she was, and spoke to her before he left, complimenting her in a strain that would turn a head like hers."

"How did she receive it?"

"Oh! she blushed, and smiled, and simpered, and the count was well pleased. He has often been at the vineyard since, and thrice, as I told you, during the last week she has stolen off to meet him."

The chief's face grew stormy as he listened; his heart beat fast, and when Janette concluded, he muttered:

"Villain! Though he were a king, he should not snatch Heloise from me—she is mine, and let the Count de Vaux look to it, if he steps between me and her."

While these scenes were transpiring in the encampment of the vintagers, Heloise had stolen away to keep a tryst with Louis de Vaux. If her absence was noticed, she supposed the chief would think she had gone to vespers at a wayside chapel, and dreamily she walked on toward the spot designated by the nobleman. What a picturesque scene, stealing along through the purple gloaming, with her blue bodice, her white kirtle, and the straw hat with its knot of blue ribbons half-shading her fair face!

It was evident that she was sadly perplexed, for two or three times she stopped and glanced back at the encampment, murmuring:

"Ah! I wonder if I am doing right. I do not like my every-day companions; there is nothing in common between us, and I loathe the life I lead, but sometimes my heart misgives me when I think of Louis de Vaux. Does he care for me, or is he, as Janette hints, only idling away his time? *Mon Dieu!* I would give worlds if I could answer this question!"

She paused in her rapid speech, and her eyes glanced wistfully along the bye-path leading to the Château de Vaux.

"Mayhap he will not come," she faltered; "mayhap

he has seen some fairer face than mine, and grown weary of me; if he does fail me to-night, the dream is over, and I will forget him as he will Heloise, the vintager. Hark! there he is now!" And it was surprising to mark how the girl's whole aspect changed when she perceived him.

At sight of her, Louis de Vaux sprang forward, and gazing at him as he stood there, you would not have wondered at the fascination he exercised over Heloise. He might have been twenty years older than she, and seemed rather delicate, from his recent illness, no doubt, but he was singularly handsome—the very best type of French nobility. His eye kindled, and his cheek flushed with the glow of his vanished youth as he saw the beautiful vintager, and his voice was low and musical, when he exclaimed:

"Aye, you are a sad laggard, Heloise; it seemed as if you would never come, and I grew so impatient that I could not wait. I am half a league beyond the trysting-place."

"Your lordship knows it is difficult for me to leave our encampment," rejoined the girl, "without being observed and followed."

"And the steward hints that your chief keeps a sharp look-out on you," said the count; "upon my word, it galls me to have such a boor aspire to you, Lily-bell; he would as ill besit you for a lover, or a husband, as your present surroundings. When I first saw you among your hoydenish, chattering companions, I thought you looked like a water-lily in the midst of a knot of coarse field-flowers, and the more I learn with regard to you, the more the mystery deepens—it haunts me night and day, Heloise."

"Destiny does not give us all the same cup to drink," rejoined the girl; "you have wealth and rank, my lord, a great chateau, servants in livery, and broad ancestral acres, while I belong to a band of wandering vintagers."

"You do not belong to them, Heloise; you were born to a different state of things, and you shall not drag on thus from year to year. Listen; I am your friend, and I will yet prove myself so. Quit this band, confide your interests to me, and I will have you educated and reared as becomes your natural grace and refinement, and your rare beauty. What say you, Heloise?"

"My father, sir, and Basil Duchene will be desperate."

"And what else?" queried the nobleman—"there is a shadow on your brow."

"Do not ask me, my lord." And she shuddered and buried her face in her hands. Her companion's features worked for a moment ere he replied:

"Do you fear to trust me?"

"Remember, you and I were strangers three weeks ago," replied the girl. "Sometimes the thought has crept into my heart that you might not deserve my confidence."

"It was unworthy of you, Heloise. The word of Louis de Vaux is as good as his oath, and you will learn it, if you allow our acquaintance to continue. I have seen much of society for the last fifteen years, and I grew so tired of the heartless, manoeuvring belles one meets there, that I had acquired the reputation of a woman-hater. Weary in body and in mind, I came down to my old chateau to spend the vintage-time. On my first visit to the vineyard, I perceived you in your youth, your beauty, and your innocence, among the roystering vintagers, and my heart was irresistibly drawn to you. I have forgotten my rank—my wealth, and stand on an equality with you!"

"Oh, my lord!" was all the girl could say.

"And now," continued the count, taking both her hands and gazing steadily into her face, "I do not ask you to act rashly. Consider my proposal. I will give you every advantage my sister should have, and the privilege of choosing a lover from those whom you may meet in the circles to which I shall remove you; and then—then if you love me still, my happiness will be complete. In a week the vintage-time will close, and Saturday evening I shall expect my reply."

"You shall have it, my lord."

"Do not call me 'my lord'—to you I am Louis de Vaux, and I beg you never again apply a title to me. Adieu, dear, dear Heloise—heaven guide you in your decision."

As he spoke, he bent low over the hand he held, and softly touching it with his lips, turned away.

CHAPTER II.

WITH a thousand conflicting emotions, Heloise left her lover, and traced her steps to the encampment. The count's words rang in her ear, his face haunted her, his offer seemed to unlock the golden gate that shut out the gay world of which he formed a part; and yet she could not help questioning whether he would remain true to her when she was brought into comparison with the ladies of his caste.

It was late when she reached the camp-ground, and she fancied all the vintagers would be asleep; but as she stole onward, the vigilant Janette raised her head and Basil Duchene confronted her, sullen and wrathful.

"Aha!" he cried, "what brings the fairest of the vintagers stealing into the camp like a thief? Nay, do not prevaricate—it will not serve your turn, now."

The warm blood shot into the girl's cheek as she retorted:

"I scorn a falsehood, as I do many other things tolerated among us, and you know it, too."

"*Sacre!*" muttered Duchene; "I know also what has taken you off three evenings of the last week. Count de Vaux is a devoted lover, methinks, and his lip curled with a satirical smile."

"Do not rail at his lordship, Basil Duchene. What right have you to interfere?"

"What right? A chief of the band ought to be watchful, and besides, I am your betrothed lover."

"How do you make that out? I never gave my assent."

"But your father looks upon you as my wife, and such you will be when you are seventeen. Two weeks more, and you will be mine!"

"Basil, would you take a wife who had no heart to give you? Be generous; give me up, I beseech you!"

"Not for a thousand worlds, Heloise; my will is iron, and your father—you understand your father, and dare not disobey him. Come in—come in; henceforth I shall keep a strict watch over you; and as for Count de Vaux, he will be blind, weak, mad, if he again crosses my path."

Heloise trembled both at his look and words, and staggering a few paces, she sank senseless to the ground. The chief sprang forward and lifted her in his arms; water was brought from a neighbouring spring, and consciousness was at length restored; but to Heloise the night dragged wearily by.

And the Count de Vaux? When he quitted her he sauntered home, lost in thought. Pride and ambition laughed at his fancy for a poor vintager, but love painted her in all her witching beauty, her winsome grace, and he thought it would be sweet indeed to win the love of a fresh young heart like hers—a heart unfolding to life's influences like a wild flower, with the dew yet glittering on its petals.

When he reached the chateau, he moved into the picture-gallery and gazed at the portraits ranged along the walls. There were his ancestors in all their stateliness, with their proud faces, their powdered hair, their ruffs and diamond coronets.

"Well," he said aloud, "for generations now De Vaux has allied himself with base blood, and perhaps they would rise from their graves to haunt me, if they knew I, at the age of thirty-six, had fallen in love with a poor vintager; but thus it is, and I have decided to take the risk. If she trusts me sufficiently to leave the band, I will keep my promise to the letter, and wait and pray for the realization of my dreams."

Musing thus, Count de Vaux retired to rest, but his sleep was haunted by the girlish face of Heloise, now smiling as she gathered grapes in the vineyards, now upturned to him in rapt attention as he talked, and now looking down to him amid the portraits in the picture-gallery.

The morning subsequent to her meeting with the count, the girl's father stalked to her and stood grim and stern before her. It must be confessed there was little resemblance between the two, and she saw intuitively she had everything to fear, and nothing to hope from him.

"Heloise!" he exclaimed, "I hear a pretty account of you from our chief, but beware how you trifle with me and Basil Duchene. You might as well try to move the Pyrenees as to change my purpose; again I say beware!"

A low moan broke from Heloise, but she knew from his nature that it was useless to speak, and she kept silent.

Mechanically she performed her wonted tasks during the weary days which ensued; mechanically she watched Janette, who was a bit of a *modiste* in a quiet way, as she fashioned finery for her own wedding, which her father and Duchene had insisted on hastening.

She had remonstrated, she had wept, she had prayed, but in vain; and yet she shrank from a marriage with Basil Duchene, as from a living death.

The utmost vigilance was maintained by the chief and his allies, and the beautiful vintager could see no way of escape.

One evening she had gone for a jar of water, which the party obtained from a little spring in a species of chaos of steep hills and valleys, or rather ravines, composed almost entirely of shingle and rock, covered ever, however, with olive grove and vines. She was filling her jar, when she perceived another face mirrored in the waters—an unfamiliar, but very striking

face, which would have aroused inquiry and kindled thought, wherever it was met.

It was dusky as those of the vintagers, but the olive had the rich clearness of amber; no bloom flushed the cheek, and the lips were not red and mobile like her own, but so thin that they seemed like a crimson thread. The eyes were large, dark, and with a solemn light in their depths, not like the will-o'-the-wisp, but the pure, bright, inaccessible stars, and her hair swept in shining lengths almost to her feet.

She wore a white robe; her small feet were shod with quaint sandals, and her brow circled with a wreath of laurels.

As she rose to her full height, she looked like a Druid priestess, ready to minister at font and altar, and Heloise drew back, affrighted at the strange visitor that had crossed her path.

"Never fear," she said, musically; "I am your friend—I would save you from a marriage with a man you hate."

"And who are you?"

"They call me Nicole, the Prophetess, and now do not fear to follow me; I can guide you where you can find rest and peace."

The girl dropped her jar, and followed her new friend, leaping from rock to rock, like a young chamois. At length they reached a forest as cool and shadowy as the wood infested years ago by the bold outlaw, Robin Hood and his merry men, and pausing, Nicole continued:

"Here we are safe; not even your chief could find you where we stand at this moment, and you may therefore feel secure. I must have a brief conversation with you, and I hope you will give an honest answer to my questions."

Heloise nodded assent, and she went on:

"I know something of the Count de Vaux's proposal; will you accept it, Heloise? Are you sufficiently interested in him to accede to his wishes, or do you hold him no dearer than Duchene?"

"Oh! lady," replied the girl, "he is already dear to me, but—but—"

"But what?"

And her interlocuter cast a keen glance upon her. "I have been acquainted with him but a brief month, and I am not certain I can trust his word."

"Heloise, you may trust him; he is a man of honour, but there may still be one barrier between you."

The girl looked pained, and she resumed:

"He is a Protestant, and I have seen you in the wayside chapel at vespers, when your day's toil was done."

"Yes, yes," faltered Heloise; "it has been my custom to worship so, but that shall not separate us."

"Nay, it ought not; and mayhap in the count's companionship your heart will yield to the new faith. Once more I bid you follow me."

With these words she threaded the vistas of the forest, and emerging, hurried on toward the chateau. Finally they stopped at the gate of the courtyard, which had been left ajar; they glided through and found themselves at a flight of stone steps leading up to a chateau perched like an eagle's eyrie on a bold cliff.

The scene visible from the height was striking in the extreme; beneath lay fields and vineyards, woods and streams, villages and hamlets; beyond rose brown hill-sides crowned with great churches and convents, and farther off might be traced the blue outline of the Pyrenees.

But Heloise was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to heed the landscape, and, half in hope, half in dread, she ascended the steps with her guide.

A grey-haired porter hastened to open the door, declaring the Countess Nicole was always welcome, and through hall and corridor she moved as if familiar with the place. Stopping at a dark, walnut door, Nicole gave a single tap, and having received permission, entered the count's favourite *salon*.

He sat in a great ebony chair, with his hands folded on the table, and his face buried in them, entirely oblivious to all that might be passing around him.

"Louis de Vaux!" exclaimed the prophetess.

The nobleman started, and as he looked up, a ray of moonlight shot through the window, revealing his ghastly pallor.

"My lord," murmured the girl, sinking at his feet, "I have come; I have quitted my father because I could not obey him."

"Thank God—thank God!" said the count; and lifting her from the floor, he held her to his heart in a convulsive embrace. "Do you know," he continued, softly smoothing her golden hair, "I have been repeatedly to the trysting-place, and when no Heloise was to be seen, I began to think you were lost to me for ever. I was just brooding over my disappointment, and revolving different plans to effect a meeting, when you entered—you and Nicole—what a joyful surprise it was!"

"Ah! my lord, I, too, feared I should be forced to

a marriage with Basil Duchene. My father was obdurate, our chief watchful, and if I had not gone to the spring while he was away for a few moments, my fate might have been sealed. I cannot tell you how astonished, and bewildered I was when I saw this stranger, and she offered to befriend me."

"Heloise, there is a bond of sympathy between us, we are both Protestants."

"So she has told me."

"And you do not shrink from a heretic?"

"No, no; you can have your faith—I mine."

"Aye, dearest Heloise, we will not quarrel, I am too happy to have you in my arms, to find fault with your religion. Nicole," he added, turning towards the prophetic, "how shall I reward you?"

"Do not speak of reward, Louis de Vaux, you are as a brother, and I am glad to be of service to you. I shall not lose sight of you and your fair Heloise; when fortune smiles, I shall rejoice with you, when you are in sorrow, I shall mourn; when you are in danger, I shall warn—it is my mission."

"One thing more I crave."

"And what is it?"

"Your blessing."

Nicole extended her hands over their bowed heads, and invoking a blessing, retired.

CHAPTER III

Two years went by on golden wings to Heloise. For the first few months after her flight from the camp-ground, she had been tortured with fears of Basil Duchene's vengeance, but as the count removed to Paris, and she was placed in such different circumstances, she forgot the old dread of the chief and her father.

The best masters were provided for her, and Heloise was an apt scholar, rewarding Louis de Vaux by her rapid advancement.

It is well known that young girls in France are kept secluded during their education, and the nobleman trembled when he thought of launching her life-boat in the whirl of society; and mayhap losing his power over her in the admiration he knew she would elicit.

And yet he remembered his promise to allow her the privilege of contrasting him with others before he required a troth-plight.

His town residence was one of the stateliest in the Rue de —, but for fifteen years it had not witnessed such a blaze of splendour as when he gave his ward's eighteenth birth-night festival.

Every window was luminous, every nook had something beautiful or striking to please the eye and gratify the taste. There were gathered sculpture and paintings from the old masters; the cumbersome brocade drapery of the times, gorgeous as the hues of Brazilian birds; the rarest specimens of Paris upholstery, and objects of *virtus* in lavish profusion.

A murmur of applause rang through the assemblage, as the count led his *protégés* through the crowd; and had you seen her then, you would not have wondered, for her girlish loveliness had superbly matured.

With her white lace robe floating about her slender figure, and pearls coiled 'mid her golden hair, she looked like a wandering Peri amid that powdered, jewelled, and plumed throng.

That night was a novel era in her existence; her triumph was complete, and her guardian felt ill at ease when he found her besieged with suitors.

"Well, Heloise," he said, as they sat at breakfast three months later, "the season is over, and I do not see but you are as fresh and blooming as at your birth-night fete."

The girl laughed and rejoined:

"Heigho! I have had enough of gaiety, and long for quiet. I wish we were at the old chateau."

"The old chateau! Then you are not spoiled by homage, for that is the loneliest place I own."

"But it seems to me the pleasantest."

"And why?"

"Do not ask impertinent questions," replied the girl, blushing as she spoke.

"I will not be impertinent, Heloise, but I should like to know who of your lovers is to be the successful candidate for your favour."

"They have all shared the same fate, being equally dear to me," said Heloise.

"Can it be possible that a man of my age will hazard a rejection, when he has seen young and eligible matches refused by the dozen?"

"What do you mean, Louis de Vaux? You are quite inexplicable!"

"Heloise, I renew my suit. Is there aught but gratitude to me in your heart to-day?"

"Oh, Louis! Louis! why will you be so blind? Can you not see that my love for you is the absorbing passion of my life—that the chateau at Languedoc is

dear to me, because you dwelt there when I first knew you?"

"Heloise, I had not dared hoped this! Often during the winter, I thought you lost to me!" and he pressed kiss after kiss on her cheek.

"I have still another confession to make," continued the girl. "I have studied your faith. I have frequently met Nicole since I have been in Paris, for she has never lost her interest in me, and has broken in upon her usual habits, that she might visit me in the great, restless city. Besides, I have stolen into your chapel, and mingled in your worship, but veiled from head to foot, so that you might not recognize me. Louis, I too am a Protestant!"

"Thank God, my cup is full to overflowing!" And once more he drew her to him, and gazed into her starry eyes, adding, "You and Nicole have kept your secret well."

"Blessings on her!" murmured Heloise, while her tears fell like summer rain. "She has been my good angel!"

"We do, indeed, owe her much!" rejoined the count. "But for her in our hour of need, you might still be a wandering vintager, the wife of Basil Duchene!"

There was a brief silence, during which Heloise shuddered, and nestled closer to her lover's side; but at length she said:

"Louis, I cannot fathom the mystery of Nicole's life of sacrifice and self-consecration; she is young, she is beautiful, she might love and be loved like other women, but she turns from these ties, and is as truly ascetic as any monk."

"Has she never told you the reason?"

"Never; pray, what can it be? At first I thought it must be a monomania, but I abandoned that opinion long ago."

"Then I will tell you; but even in these times, it might harm Nicole, if you did not keep it a secret."

"You may trust me: I will be silent as the grave, Louis."

"*Et bien*," said the nobleman, "Nicole's childhood passed in the troublous times when the king's troops waged their fierce warfare against the Protestants. They dwelt in one of those valleys which we can see now from our old chateau, weaving the rough cloth they manufactured in those days, and watching the flocks upon the hill-side. Their cottage was attacked by a band of dragoons; the father hanged, like the vilest felon, and his wife pinioned within the dwelling, in the hope of forcing her to make the sign of the cross, while the children were ranged round her with burning matches in their hands."

"Oh, Louis—Louis!" sobbed Heloise, "how terrible!"

"The worst is yet to be told, dearest; when the first match had burned down, the poor mother made the sign of the cross, and as the dragoons rioted in the cottage all night, she and her little ones served them. But the next day she was a maniac, and wandering into the woods, with her youngest child clasped to her heart, was lost to her family. The children were scattered far and wide, but one of them you have seen. Nicole dwelt in the forest, growing up in the faith of her fathers; the country people believe her to be inspired, and she teaches many among the cliffs and gorges of the mountains. Now and then she has been persecuted, but the people love and honour her, and should the woods where she lives be searched by the king's troops, she would find a hiding-place among the loyal hearts that cling to her and her God."

"Poor, poor Nicole!" said Heloise, "her life has been far more stormy than mine, as a wandering vintager, though I used to loathe it more and more with every passing day."

"As for you," murmured the count, "I trust there will be no more thorns in your path; only roses."

A week later De Vaux and his betrothed bride were installed in the chateau at Languedoc. The steward had announced that his master was coming down from Paris with his bride-elect, and everything wore a festive aspect.

The avenue, winding up from the park-gate, was spanned with triumphal arches, and flowers strewn in the way, the De Vaux escutcheon flaunted from the grey turrets; and the peasantry in gala costume feasted in the grounds.

When the family chariot appeared, bearing the count, and the blushing, smiling Heloise, cheer after cheer cleft the blue sky, and the castle-bell began to ring a jubilant peal.

Meanwhile a dark, saturnine man was stealing through the shrubbery, and when the chariot rode by, he shook his clenched hand, and muttered:

"My hour has come—vengeance, vengeance! I have waited long, but only to deepen my revenge! Ha, ha! does he despise Basil Duchene, the chief of the wandering vintagers? He shall know I have a prior claim to his fair Heloise! Not here, in the midst

of his tenantry, will I strike the blow—it shall fall in secret."

With these words, the chief crouched among the laurels, watching, listening, waiting—he knew why.

The day wore on, and at eventide, when the pomp of the summer sunset still lingered above the distant Pyrenees, Heloise murmured:

"Louis is busy looking over accounts with his steward; I will take a stroll to our old trysting-place and be back to dinner," and tying on her hat, she glided from the chateau.

Wrapped in sweet dreams, she strolled on, heedless of danger, but suddenly a tall form sprang forward, an iron grasp settled on her arm, a pair of wild eyes gazed fiercely into her own, and she forgot everything in the appalling consciousness that she was again in the power of Basil Duchene.

When reason came back to her, it seemed as if she were awaking from a horrid dream; dark-browed vintagers crouched around her as of yore; the watch-fire burned fitfully; Janette Dupre was chattering as was her wont, and the grim chief looked remorseless as Fate.

A sharp cry broke from the girl as she recognized her surroundings to be actualities, and Duchene advanced to her and exclaimed:

"We meet again, Heloise; for two years you have been a lady, and now you must come back to your old life—till, till from sunrise to sunset! Mayhap you have forgotten me, but I did not forget you; I allowed you to remain with De Vaux, till every fibre of his heart was linked with you, that my revenge might be complete in the blow that falls on him now."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the girl; but nothing daunted the villain replied:

"Reville me if you will—it cannot harm me! While you were unconscious I mounted my horse and rode a long distance from the chateau. Circumstances have made it necessary that we should encamp in bye-places at present, and we are in the heart of a wood where your lover would never think of tracking us. I have sent Victor Brandt for a priest, and you will be mine on the morrow. Hist—hist! what's that?" and the superstitious man paused, and grew pale at the sight that met his gaze.

On a slight eminence stood a white-robed figure, with long, floating, black hair and eyes full of solemn meaning, and what seemed to the chief, supernatural light. One hand was uplifted, as if to draw attention to her presence, and in a voice like breezy music of the wind among the poplars, she cried:

"Basil Duchene, woe be to you if you harm Heloise—woe, woe, woe! This is not the first time I have met you; I have been near you when you did not dream I was nigh, and I know your black heart is no fitting mate for the young girl, who, though she was among you, was not of you even then—who hated your rude oaths, your evil habits and all the associations connected with you!"

She stopped, astounded at the effect of her words; Duchene would have openly defied the Count de Vaux, but now he stood irresolute; he had only paid chance visits to the neighbourhood, and had never before had a meeting with the Prophetess of Languedoc, but he found strength to say:

"Woman, who are you?"

The prophetess did not speak, but some of the vintagers better acquainted with the *locale* replied:

"It must be Nicole, the witch."

"A witch!" echoed Duchene, in dismay; "tell more about her—if what you say is true, we will tramp at once!"

The vintagers eagerly gathered around him to state what they knew with regard to her, and when they again looked up, Nicole had disappeared and Heloise was missing.

"She's gone!" muttered the chief.

"And Heloise too!" said the flippant Janette.

"Yes, yes! How singular. She must have spirited Heloise away!"

At that moment, the same clear, flute-like voice came pulsing on the wind:

"Basil Duchene!" it cried, "two years ago I guided Heloise through the dark nooks of the forest to the chateau, where she found a home, and I will still guard her! Beware how you follow or threaten one whom I protect!"

The chief crossed himself, and endeavoured to regain his self-possession, but for weeks he did not recover the effect of his meeting with the mysterious Nicole.

We will now return to the Chateau de Vaux, where we left the nobleman looking over accounts with his steward.

During the process, his thoughts frequently wandered to Heloise, and at the dinner-hour hastened to join her in the dining-hall, with his quaint, walnut wainscots, beaufets, and sideboards, its old-fashioned sconces ranged along the walls, and the polished floor, "gleaming lustrous in the lamp-light."

"Ah!" he observed, glancing round, "I feared I was late, and that Heloise would be waiting for me!"

"No, no, *m'a'mselle* has not come in yet," replied one of the liveried servants.

The count paced the room for a few moments, and then flew up to her chamber and tapped at the door.

No answer to his summons was given, and he peered in, but *Heloise* was neither there, nor in the music-room, the parlours, nor the picture-gallery, and at length it was ascertained she had been strolling through the park.

A sudden dread fastened on the count, and his heart stood still, as he thought that she might have fallen into the hands of *Basil Duchene*. All the servants were gathered in the dining-hall, and questioned with regard to the matter, but only this fact could be gleaned from the whole mass of evidence brought to bear on the subject.

The gardener had seen a strange man lurking round—a man whom he described as tall and powerfully built, but he declared he should never have given him a second thought, if it had not been for his master's inquiries, and could not tell whither he went.

"Ring the castle bell," cried the Count de Vaux, "ring it as you used to, old *Pierre*, when you wished to rouse the country people in war-times."

The gray-haired porter obeyed, and as the note of alarm rang from the chateau-tower, the peasantry came flocking from their cottage homes to see what had happened to their master, and the neighbouring gentry rode up to offer their sympathy and aid.

"Friends!" exclaimed the nobleman, appearing on the battlements with uncovered head, "you all saw my joyous return to Languedoc this morning, with my beautiful bride elect, who has been for two years my ward; to-night she is missing and I fear she has fallen into the hands of the chief of a band of wandering vintagers. Does anybody know *Basil Duchene*?"

"Aye, aye," responded a voice from the crowd, "and a vile wretch he is."

"It is not yet the vintage time," observed De Vaux; "if he has come into the neighbourhood, it must have been to carry out a base plot, to avenge himself on a lady as far above him as the heavens are above the earth."

"May it please your lordship," said the same voice among the throng—his band are encamped in yonder forest, but in the densest part of it, where the underbrush is as thick as an East Indian jungle."

"Do you know the spot?"

"Exactly, my lord."

"Well, then, I shall set out immediately in pursuit of poor *Heloise*, and whoever will join me, shall be right welcome."

The next moment he had left the battlements, and soon stood in the courtyard, armed and equipped for his gallop through wild gorges and lonely forest nooks.

All professed their eagerness to follow him, and quite a formidable array swept through the park-gate. Down the height on which the chateau was built, across rustic bridges ringing beneath the horses' hoofs, through ravines so deep that it seemed as if silence and shadows must ever reign there, and amid olive-groves whose silver-grey foliage rustled in the breeze, *Louis de Vaux* and his friends made their way till they reached the verge of the forest, where the vintagers were encamped.

Suddenly a figure came gliding through the night—white, solemn, ghost-like,—it was *Nicolas*, the Prophetess of Languedoc, with her snowy robe, her steadfast eyes, her floating hair, and her noiseless step.

"What would you, *Louis de Vaux*?" she asked. "Has the dove fallen into the snare of the fowler—would you seek the vulture's nest, that you may find your stray lamb?"

Some of the nobleman's companions looked puzzled, but he understood her, and her metaphors, and rejoined:

"Yes; know you aught of the lost one, *Nicolas*?"

"Your search is ended, *Heloise* is safe."

"Thank God! and you were her deliverer, I will venture to say?"

"Do not speak of that now; come with me."

The count dismounted from his steed and followed *Nicolas* a few paces, when *Heloise* sprang to meet him with a sudden bound, and was again wrapped in his arms and sheltered by his love.

There was no time for inquiries, but *Nicolas* said:

"This is a night of joyful triumph to you, *Louis de Vaux*! My own white palfrey shall bear your bride elect home to the chateau!"

As she spoke she gave a signal, and a snowy palfrey appeared in the wood path. As *Heloise* emerged from the forest mounted on that beautiful palfrey, cheer after cheer rang out on the breeze; and the journey homeward was a *marche de triomphe*.

No queen, returning to her throne which had been wrested from her, could have been hailed with louder acclamations than *Heloise*, and a day of feasting succeeded her restoration to the castle.

Basil Duchene heard a graphic account of the stir at the chateau, the alarm-bell, which called peasantry and nobility alike to the count's aid and the gallop to the forest, where they encountered the Languedoc witch, and received the girl whom she had spirited from the vintagers' camp.

"*Sacre!*" growled the chief, "henceforth I will have nothing to do with *Heloise*; she was always a perverse imp, and cost me a deal of trouble. She may go now, and as for me, I am convinced there are those far worthier of my love than she." *Janette* smiled encouragingly, and he went on: "Janette, you are just the woman for my wife: will you marry me?"

The girl gave a ready assent, and with this bluff love-making she was obliged to be satisfied. A week afterwards she was *Madame Duchene*.

In a rude *cabane*, which had once been inhabited by a Languedoc woodman, but had been deserted by him, when promoted to the rank of forester in Count de Vaux' service, lay a poor vintager. His blouse and sabots were of the coarsest material; his hair and beard were matted from neglect, and his whole appearance pitiable in the extreme. He was evidently in the worst stages of a terrible disease, for his cheek was flushed, his eye glassy, and his lips parched and discoloured.

At length a light foot-fall sounded on the red tiles of the floor, and *Nicolas* the Prophetess stood by the heap of leaves on which he was lying.

"You have come then," he faltered, looking up into her serene face; "why did you not leave me to die alone?"

"My mission is not for my own pleasure," replied the prophetess; "when I saw you in distress, I bathed your brow and tried to point your burdened soul upward. Do you still wish to confess to a father of the church?"

"No, no—I believe I may as well pour the story into your ear."

"Go on;" and bending low, *Nicolas* listened to the confession, which broke from *Antoine Morant's* lips. When he had concluded he asked:

"*Nicolas*, do you know the lady whom I thus wronged?"

"Yes; she is sojourning for her health with her friend, the Count de Vaux."

Morant started, and grasping her arm vehemently, exclaimed:

"Bring her to me—I must see her before I die."

Nicolas glided away, and in two hours returned with a tall, slender, blue-eyed, golden-haired woman, who might have counted forty summers, but the habitual sadness of her face made her appear much older.

"*Ursule Armand*," began the vintager, "you doubtless wonder why you have been summoned to meet such a man as I am? but in my youth I was your father's secretary. I was mad enough to fall in love with you, and your scorn drove me wild. I quitted your chateau, and descended from one degree of degradation to another, till I reached the pitiful condition in which you find me. I have gambled with the Landes shepherds, tried my luck with the contrabands of the Pyrenees, and been a rag-picker in the streets of Paris. You married the man of your choice, and when I chanced to see you in the Champs Elysées, with your children, I resolved to be avenged. Two weeks afterward, when *Heloise* was playing on the banks of the Seine, under the superintendence of her *bonne*, she mysteriously disappeared, and when she could not be found, the nurse told you she had fallen into the river and been drowned. She was then ten years of age, but the shock of her abduction brought on a brain fever, and when she recovered she had no recollection of her former life. This was fortunate for my projects: I taught her to call me father, and it was sweet to me to see her degraded as I had been. We joined bands of wandering vintagers from time to time, and her dainty fingers were hardened with toil, but she loathed her lot, her associates and everything around her, and had I not been adamant, I should have faltered in my purpose."

"And where is she now?" queried the lady, in breathless anxiety.

"Hold, hold, and you shall hear. I promised her in marriage to *Basil Duchene*, a man of my own stamp, but when Count de Vaux was smitten by her beauty and what he called her natural refinement, he proved a formidable rival. In spite of our utmost efforts to the contrary, he lured her from us, and she is there now."

"*Louis de Vaux*—Oh! my God, that *Heloise* has reminded me strangely of my lost one; my heart was drawn to her from our first meeting."

"*Lady Armand*, she is your child! go back to the chateau and claim her; tell *Louise de Vaux* it is no base-born girl he has won, for gentle blood flows in her veins, and—and beg *Heloise* to pray for my soul's peace."

A solemn silence ensued; *Nicolas* and the baroness knelt, for they saw that the vintager's spirit was

taking its flight. Then they closed the door and hastened to the chateau.

Hurrying across the bow-room, where *Heloise* sat, *Lady Armand* clasped her in his arms, and wept for joy, while *Nicolas* related what had passed.

"Your child!" cried the girl, "tis sweet to find a mother in you! *Louis*, *Louis*, this is happiness indeed!"

On that scene we will not linger; it is sufficient for our purpose to state that the marriage of Count de Vaux and *Lady Heloise* was solemnized at his own chapel by a Protestant clergyman, the friend who had proved so faithful standing near, with her white raiment sweeping the altar-stone and her brow circled with a laurel-wreath, and that in after years their descendants were taught to reverence the name and memory of *Nicolas*, the Prophetess of Languedoc. C. E. G.

THE power of the penny is well illustrated in the accounts of the Birkenhead ferries. In the year ending March 31st, their returns were nearly £35,000, and their profits above £13,000.

A MAORI WEDDING IN LONDON.—At the parish church of St. Anne, Limehouse, a few days ago, *Kamariara Te Wherepapa*, one of the New Zealand chiefs now residing at the Strangers' Home, Limehouse, was married to *Elizabeth Reid*, of the parish of Marylebone.

THE NEW GUN VESSELS.—We perceive by the statement of the Secretary to the Admiralty that their lordships had come to the determination of contracting for two only of the six gun vessels authorised by the Navy Estimates. These vessels will be about 700 tons, and 160-horse power, 160 feet long, armed with the 100-pounders. They will be armour-plated, and of a speed of about 9 or 10 knots, propelled by twin screws.

DEATH OF A ROYAL PROTEGEE.—Her Royal Highness the Princess Victoria Gouramma of Coorg died on Wednesday week. Her Majesty took great interest in the welfare of the deceased lady. The Princess was confirmed and admitted as a communicant of the Church of England under the auspices of her Majesty, and a few years ago married Colonel John Campbell.

THE ORLEANS FAMILY.—The Comte de Paris, heir of the Bourbons and the House of Orleans, has been betrothed to his cousin, daughter of the Duke and Duchess de Montpensier. Shall we yet, after so many vicissitudes, see *Louis Philippe's* dream fulfilled, and his descendants possess both thrones? It will not be the first instance in history of an apparently successful crime.

THE SWALLOW.—During a period of thirty-three years we have only once known the swallow here so early as the 5th of April, and this was in 1834, a very remarkable season in many respects. Notices of the nightingale being heard have been equally rare, but these all undoubtedly refer to the song thrush. The earliest authentic record of the nightingale's arrival is by Mr. Doubleday, on the 9th of April in same year, 1831.

EMIGRATION FROM LIVERPOOL.—The Government returns for the past month show a great increase in the number of emigrants from Liverpool. During the month 35 ships have sailed under the Act for the United States with 13,118 steerage and 359 cabin-passengers; 2,600 were English, 314 Scotch, 9,250 Irish, and 945 foreigners. Two ships have sailed for Victoria with 584 steerage and seven cabin-passengers; 212 were English, 55 Scotch, and 306 Irish. Of ships not under the Act 16 ships sailed to various places and carried 420 passengers. The total emigration for the quarter was 26,549 persons.

OUR OLD SAILORS.—There is residing at the back of Avon, in Tewkesbury, an old sailor, named *Sandilands*, now above eighty years of age, and confined to his bed, who was one of four who carried the wounded *Nelson* into the cockpit. The old man is destitute, having no means of subsistence but 2s. 6d. or 3s. a week kindly given him by *Lady Nelson*. Three years since the public was appealed to on his behalf by Mr. R. A. Hullab, but the sum collected, about £50, is now exhausted, and, as the parish allows him nothing, he has but a miserable prospect before him, unless charitable friends will again put him in a position to make his income some 8s. per week. The case is well authenticated and her gracious Majesty the Queen sent on the former occasion £14 to the vicar of this parish with commands to be informed should the old man again suffer want.—Another Case: There lives in an obscure street in the city of Ripon an old sailor who served under *Nelson* both at Trafalgar and at the battle of the Nile. He is eighty-four years old, and entirely dependent upon the parish for existence. Cannot, and ought not, something to be done to reward in some measure these contributors to England's naval glory in their last years?



[ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, SHOTTERY.]

THE SHAKESPEARE TRICENTENARY COMMEMORATION.

(Continued from our last.)

In the order of our narrative, we now come to an authentic and important incident of Shakespeare's life—his marriage. Whether glover, woolstapler, butcher, schoolmaster, or attorney's clerk (for some one of all these occupations is stated to have been followed by Shakespeare), we find that in the autumn of 1582, while under nineteen years of age, he took to wife Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a substantial yeoman of Shottery, an adjoining hamlet of Stratford. Neither the precise date of the marriage, nor the name of the church at which it was celebrated, has been ascertained; but a marriage bond was discovered a few years since by Sir T. Phillips, in the registry at Worcester, which leaves no doubt that the ceremony took place some time after November 28th, 1582. Anne Hathaway, at the supposed time of the marriage, must have been nearly eight years the senior of her husband. Her father was Richard Hathaway, with whom Shakespeare's father, it is known, had had intimate business relations. Her family had held property at Shottery from the middle of the sixteenth century; and, indeed, it may be said, has held to the present day, for a Hathaway was recently in possession of the family property there, and the house still stands in which she lived when the boy-lover, who was to become the world's greatest poet, wooed and won her, and took her thence to be his wife, and, as it has proved, to share in his immortality of fame.

The marriage of Shakespeare at such an early age has been gravely reproved by many; but who does not know that

As in the sweetest buds
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

And although it may possibly have been an imprudent, it has by no means been proved to have been an unhappy marriage.

The first offspring of this union, Susanna, was born in May, 1583. The only other issues were Hamnet and Judith, twins, who were baptized February 2nd, 1584-5. Shortly after the birth of these children, Shakespeare—as we have previously intimated—quitted Stratford, leaving his wife and family behind. There is a tradition that this step was owing to his having become implicated, with some other young men, in

depredations on the deer of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote. At its worst, this kind of offence was considered only an indiscretion, or youthful frolic, in those days; but Sir Thomas Lucy evinced so much determination to have his deer protected, and the wild youths who "lifted" them punished, that Shakespeare, it is asserted, was obliged to fly before the threatened vengeance of the baronet and the law. He is alleged, however, to have taken revenge on Sir Thomas in a bitter ballad; and subsequently elevated his persecutor to an immortality of ridicule as "Justice Shallow," in *Henry IV.* There is much doubt about the whole of this transaction, however; but there is none at all that, from whatever motive—fear, distress, or ambition—Shakespeare left Stratford after the birth of his children, his wife and family remaining there. He had, doubtless, been influenced, more or less, by the desire to seek a wider scope for his exertions than he could find in Stratford.

The hamlet of Shottery, where the poet had met his wife, consists of but a few cottages and farm-houses, straggling here and there, with their gardens full of flowers. At the far end of the village, in a little valley, where runs the village brooklet, stands Anne Hathaway's cottage. An old, long, timbered house it is, its front chequered with squares, where the vine stretches its clasping arms, its stones covered with moss, and its thatch bearing the same green covering badge of time. Inside, it is nothing more than a simple English cottage, with its high mantelshelf ornamented with a bright row of candlesticks and earthenware; its clean floor of Binton stone cracked and sunk in places. Its garden is an unpretending cottage garden, exactly resembling thousands of other Warwickshire gardens, and like them is filled with wall-flowers, lavender shrubs, and kitchen herbs. And behind it stands an orchard, which in the sweet spring time and summer is a mass of pink blossoms and fruit; while the meadows beyond are covered with cowslips.

All these charms were there in Shakespeare's time; there is the same beauty in nature now as there was when he came here to woo; but there is more here than he found in the spot, for amongst the flowers and the fruit, the laden orchard trees, and the bright green meadows, there exists the abiding consecration which the associations of the scene have received from his name. The cottage where the village belle resided has remained comparatively unaltered, at least since it was last repaired, at the

date indicated on a stone built in the central chimney, and which bears the inscription I.H. 1697. It had originally been only one tenement, but is now divided into three. The roof, as we have above intimated, is of thatch, and the walls are of timber-framing, filled in with brick and plaster-work, with slabs of lias shale for a foundation. The only thing remaining in the interior which is likely to be as old as Shakespeare's time is an antique bedstead of carved oak, in a bedroom above the parlour. A bacon-cup-board to the left of the fireplace in one of its rooms has the letters I.H., E.H., T.B., and the date 1697 inscribed on the cross-bar of its latticed door. These are clearly the initials of John and Elizabeth Hathaway, and of the occupier of the house perhaps when it was repaired. A specimen of heavy home-spun linen, preserved in an old chest, is considered to belong to the Hathaways' period, for it is marked with the initials E.H. Altogether, the "cottage" must have been in its day a highly-respectable farm-house, as evidenced by its garden and orchard.

Upon Shakespeare's house something like a shade of doubt may rest; but no uncertainty exists as regards Anne Hathaway's cottage. It is certain that here Shakespeare came to woo her as a lover; and it is not a little pleasant to find that the woman whom he could love dwelt in so sweet a spot. There is, indeed, a tradition that, as a married man, Shakespeare did not live happily with his wife; but there is no real foundation for this notion, and we mention it only to dismiss it with the contempt which it deserves; notwithstanding that the supporters of the calumny fortify their assertion by quoting the poet's own lines:

As the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly; blasted in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.

The argument *ad hominem* is in this case worse than weak; we repeat there is no evidence that Shakespeare lived unhappily with his wife—nor any that in these lines he portrayed his own experience.

To suppose that Shakespeare lived at variance with his wife is to take for granted that he was ever giving the lie to his own thoughts, for did he not ask—

What dearer debt in all humanity
Than wife to husband?

The man who asks such a question must be held to have already answered it in his own heart and feelings. It has been truly said that a good poet must be a good man. Not until brambles bring forth figs shall we see the phenomenon equally startling of a bad man writing true poetry; for real poetry is nothing less than the reflex of a man's own spiritual nature; and it is certain that Shakespeare's vast superiority over his fellow-dramatists is owing as much to his higher moral power as to the greater strength of his intellect.

Granting that Shakespeare did not bequeath much by his will to his wife—the fact on which the tradition that he lived on ill terms with her chiefly rests—it has become known that she was already well provided for by her own family; and consequently there was little necessity to largely endow her in his will. That Shakespeare's wife loved her husband, there needs no stronger evidence than the fact that she, with her last breath, requested to be buried by his side; and that Shakespeare valued her society as his wife, may surely be concluded from the fact that he made Stratford his permanent home and settled there when he had acquired wealth and risen to eminence.

The principal entrance to Anne Hathaway's house is through a door fastened with an old-fashioned wooden latch, and which introduces the visitor to the chief passage, or hall, as it would have been formerly termed. An ancient "settle" is here exhibited as a "relic," but is not authentic. A door on the left leads to the principal room, which is an apartment of considerable size for a house of this description, with a rude stone floor and a timbered roof, and greatly resembles the lower rooms of Shakespeare's birthplace. Portions of the oaken wainscot, which probably took the place of the more ancient painted cloth or arras, some time in the 17th century, still remain. It does not appear to belong to Shakespeare's time, and it probably was introduced in the reparations made by John Hathaway. In the bedroom over this apartment is a carved oak bedstead, of the Elizabethan period, and which has long been associated with the name of Anne Hathaway. It is said to have been an heirloom in the house from the sixteenth century; and there is no improbability in the supposition that it may have been slept upon by the poet's future bride. But even if this cannot be proved, it is of considerable interest as a memorial of the social position held by the family of Anne Hathaway; for it is one of several bedsteads which are mentioned in an inventory of their goods, which was taken in the year 1624.

We English are perpetually reproached by our lively neighbours across the channel that we "are a



[SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH-ROOM.]

nation of shopkeepers." Well, we need not feel ashamed to admit the fact; we are a nation of shopkeepers—a nation eminently of traders (and of successful traders, too, as the last Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer triumphantly demonstrated). But we can understand and value something else besides "shop"; at fit times and seasons we can appreciate just as well as our mercurial friends the worth of an "idea." We do not, it is true, make war for it; but we know how to give due honour to every "idea" that is peaceful, and noble, and great. We have just given evidence of this in the reception accorded to Garibaldi. To-day we are giving to the world another and still stronger proof of it, for on this present 23rd of April we enter on a three days' festival, in national commemoration of the three hundredth birthday of "the greatest man whom we Englishmen have produced,"—William Shakespeare. It is a proud reflection that, nation of traders though we be, we have given to the world such a noble store of mental riches as surrounds the "idea" of our Shakespeare, of whom we can truly say:

That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment labour'd and distill'd
Through all the needful uses of our lives,
That could a man remember but his lines,
He should not touch at any serious point,
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.
His learning savours not the school-like gloss
That most consists in echoing words and terms,
And soonest wins a man an empty name;
Nor any long or far-fetched circumstance
Wrapp'd in the curious generalities of art;
But a direct and analytic sum
Of all the worth and first effects of art.
And for his poetry, 'tis so ramm'd with life,
That it shall gather strength of life, with being,
And live hereafter more admir'd than now.

Ben Jonson wrote these lines three hundred years ago; and how truly he prophesied of the admiration with which future generations of Englishmen would regard the name of Shakespeare, there needs no remark of ours to show. Evidence of its truth has not been wanting at any period since the great bard died; but its strongest confirmation, perhaps, is to be found to-day in Stratford-on-Avon, where thousands, not only of his own countrymen, but of many other nations, have congregated to do homage to his memory, and, for a time, inhale the self-same air that "was a breath to Shakespeare."

The interest attaching to the place and the house in which Shakespeare lived centres in the apartment in which it is supposed he was born. Passing into the shop by a door which is divided into a hatch, we look back into the street over the lower half, and through the open window, with its projecting stall for meat, and its wooden roof above. The walls of this room are of plaster, and the solid oak beams rest on the stone foundation. The floor is rudely paved with stones, and on the right is a spacious fireplace, the sides being built of brick, and the chimney-piece cut with a low, pointed arch out of a massive beam of oak. The construction is primitive, and tells of the

times gone by, the days, or rather perhaps the nights, when the chimney-corner was a coveted and cosy seat. On the left is a small recess, which appears to have been used as a cupboard. Quitting this room, a raised step leads into another apartment, which is termed the kitchen, a room somewhat similar to the other, with a stone floor and timbered ceiling. The fireplace also is of ancient construction, of the same date as that in the shop. The beam across the opening, the antique mantel-piece, consists of an immense oblong piece of timber. In the window facing the fireplace was formerly the circular pane of glass, about six inches in diameter, ornamented with the arms of the Merchants of the Woolstaple, which Malone produced as evidence that Shakespeare's father dealt in wool; but there is no doubt now that the glass came originally from the Guild Chapel, and was inserted in the window here by Shakespeare Hart, a glazier, and a descendant in the third generation from the poet's sister.

Ascending from the kitchen by a small flight of steps, the visitor is introduced into the room in which tradition asserts that Shakespeare was born. The ceiling is low, as is generally the case in the upper part of most English houses of so early a date; a fireplace of simple but massive construction is near the door on the left hand, and the room is lighted by a window now glazed in the modern style, but formerly consisting of a flat lattice of three lights. This apartment, if we imagine it as it would be in the sixteenth century, hung with painted cloths, would have a look of comfort which its present appearance scarcely bears. Shakespeare, at all events, was not born in a room enclosed with whitewashed walls; and it must be recollected that the home of the poet in its actual condition can at best only afford a faint outline, derived from its few surviving features, of what it originally was. The truthfulness of this most interesting room is no longer violated by the exhibition of so-called relics, which for so long a time excited the ridicule of all intelligent visitors, and created even a doubt as to the identity of the house itself in connection with Shakespeare.

All the authorities concur in the invariable and uncontradicted tradition of the town, that in this lowly abode our inimitable Bard drew his first breath. Let us not disturb the belief. To look upon this ancient house—perhaps one of the oldest in Stratford—votaries have gathered from every region where the name of Shakespeare is known. An admired foreign writer says, "I had come to Stratford on a poetical pilgrimage. My first visit was to the house where Shakespeare was born; and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small, mean-looking edifice of wood and plaster—a true nestling-place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by- corners. The walls of its chambers are covered with names and inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks, and conditions, from the prince to the peasant; and present a simple but striking instance of the sponta-

neous and universal homage of mankind to the great poet of nature."

Washington Irving had a true poet's faith even in the relics:—"What is it to us whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into the belief of them, and enjoy all the charm of reality?" The American pilgrim found a representative of the incredulous portion of the world in the old sexton of Stratford, and a superannuated cory named John Ange: "I was grieved to hear these two worthy wights speak very dubiously of the eloquent dame who shows the Shakespeare House. John Ange shook his head when I mentioned her valuable and inexhaustible collection of relics, particularly her remains of the mulberry-tree; and the old sexton even expressed a doubt as to Shakespeare having been born in her house. I soon discovered that he looked upon her mansion with an evil eye, as a rival to the poet's tomb; the latter having comparatively but few visitors. Thus it is that historians differ at the very outset; and mere pebbles make the stream of truth diverge into different channels even at the fountain-head."

The traditional belief is sanctified by long usage and universal acceptance. The merely curious look in reverent silence upon that mean room, with its massive joists and plastered walls, firm with ribs of oak, where we are told the poet of the human race was born; and hither lovingly have also come the sons and daughters of genius, whose eyes are now closed on the world, but who have left that behind which the world "will not willingly let die," and veiled their glistening lids under this humble roof, whilst thoughts unutterable—solemn, confiding, grateful, humble—clustered around their hearts in that hour. The autographs of Byron and Scott are amongst hundreds of votive inscriptions; and all of them, in accordance with received tradition, testify to the belief that William Shakespeare saw the light in this venerated room.

Here, then, is a true temple of Fame; and remembering what great son of immortality it was who first saw the light within its walls, the fine lines of Young rise into the mind:

Some when they die, die all; they mould'ring clay
Is but an emblem of their memories:
The space quite closes up thro' which they pass'd;—
But he has liv'd—and left a mark behind
Shall pluck the shining age from vulgar time,
And give it whole to late posterity!

(To be continued.)

THE LAW FOR THE POOR IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.—An old boatman, seventy-seven years of age, who had resided in Guernsey during sixty-eight years of his life, was, on becoming disabled and chargeable to the parish, removed against his will to his native parish of Sopley, near Southampton, by order of "The Royal Court of Guernsey." The cruelty and absurdity of this proceeding have been brought under the notice of the Poor-law Board; and that body has suggested to the Home Secretary the desirability of limiting the power of the Guernsey authorities in this respect, and assimilating it with the paupers' removal laws of England.

A PRINCESS'S REBUKE.—A Russian princess of great beauty, in company with her father and a young French marquis, visited a celebrated Swiss doctor of the eighteenth century, Michael Scappack, when the marquis began to pass one of his jokes upon the long white beard of one of the doctor's neighbours, who was present. He offered to bet twelve louis d'ors that no lady present would dare to kiss the dirty old fellow! The Russian princess ordered her attendant to bring a plate, deposited twelve louis d'ors, and sent it to the marquis, who was too polite to decline his stake. The fair Russian then approached the peasant, saying: "Permit me, venerable father, to salute you after the manner of my country," and embraced and gave him a kiss. She then presented him with what was on the plate, saying: "Take this as a remembrance of me, and as a sign that the Russian girls think it their duty to honour old age."

COTTON TRADE AT MATAMORAS.—The *New York World's* correspondent says:—Large trains of cotton arrive at Matamoras every day. English houses in Liverpool and Manchester send their ships with supercargoes to Matamoras, where they discharge the cargo and await their cotton, which is brought in the following way: A clerk or supercargo leaves England two or three months before the ship, and goes on horseback to Eagle Pass, and from there to San Antonio, Texas. In San Antonio or another place in Texas, he buys the cotton, engages the mules and trains, and the cotton starts for Mexico; mule trains arrive commonly in 30 or 35 days. Cotton is between 5c. and 6c. per pound in Texas, but 50 per cent. has to be paid extra as tax to the Confederate States' Government. The Confederate Government supports the trade in every way, but no train is allowed to go on the road below Laredo, for fear it might fall into

the hands of the Northern troops. With all expenses, a pound of cotton in Matamoros comes to 21c. or 25c., but is worth in the place 35c. Since January, 1863, about 80,000 or 85,000 bales of cotton have been shipped from here. A pound of cotton sent to Liverpool, after being pressed, shipped, and every expense paid, will cost 36c. to 40c. The different taxes in Texas and Mexico bring it to that sum; but as there are many accidents it is not possible to make a positive statement.

HERMINE DEFOURCHET.

"AND then?" said the young girl in a low voice.
"And then, Hermine, ah, then, happiness and glory! Glory for having served the emperor; happiness—paradise with you!"

The young man pressed the hand of Hermine to his heart; his large black eyes were fixed on her face with such a concentrated look as caused the blush that rose to her cheeks to be almost painful. She withdrew her hand, and said, tremblingly:

"You may be unsuccessful; you may be discovered; the king's spies are as alert as gold can make them. The emperor is still at Elba; he cannot save you. Should you be imprisoned—should you die—oh, Maximilian, then I should no longer live!"

The young man's face became pale, his eyes were suffused with tears. Sinking on his knees at the feet of Hermine, he cried:

"God will not let me die! He will prosper me for your sake, Hermine, for you are worthy!"

His tones lowered to a whisper at the close of his words, and the two sat in silence underneath the soft sky of Provence. The moon gleamed peacefully and sweet on the waters of the Mediterranean; the far-off sails were like the dim visions of some bark of hope, sent from fairyland, for on their white canvas the stars had set a sheen of translucent beauty that must have been woven by elfin hands. The dip of oars near the coast was the liquid music that should accompany a scene that would have been beautiful even to the visions of hashish. Maximilian and Hermine sat on a headland that ran out to meet the sea—a headland picturesque enough to be the bride of the water by which it sought to be caressed. Below them the lights and shadows of Marseilles checked the coast, but the indistinct hum of its inhabitants was insufficient to disturb the visionary quiet of the shore. It seemed as though that for this night heaven smiled upon the earth, and granted a beautiful and sweet peace.

Hermine turned her face toward the land; a half smile came to her lips, out it was succeeded by a sigh. She stooped toward Maximilian and said, softly—

"Do you not detect the fragrance from my father's vineyard? When shall we again inhale that delicious perfume together? I am oppressed with sad presentiments. Promise me that you will return. I do not mean that I suspect that you will be unfaithful to me; that, Maximilian, is impossible. Say to me that you will come back, that you will surmount impossibilities, and I shall endeavour to believe you. It will at least give me strength to endure the separation."

Her words were too characteristic of a French girl to cause her lover surprise. He looked up at the face inclined towards his; he saw in the luminous dusk of her eyes how earnest were her words; he knew by the tremulous crimson of her lips how deeply her soul had been in her voice. He said:

"By my honour—by our love, more sacred still—I tell you that six months from to-night I will await you here." He paused and lifted his eyes to that fair Provencal sky that had bent above their youth. His voice faltered as he proceeded. "And now, Hermine, take my farewell, for my happy hour with you is ended; I must now begin to serve in the cause that we now know to be noble."

He rose and extended his arms toward her, his face glowing with emotions he could not wholly suppress. For a moment she hesitated; she dreaded the adieu, for she saw before him dangers which affrighted her more than they could him. It is always thus; for the woman who is left solitary and uncomfortable there remains with her the horror of a helpless fear, the dull pain of a waiting, watching life. A man would grow insane or die; God who helps, only knows how a woman can thus bear it.

"Hermine!" muttered Maximilian, stooping and clasping her in his arms—"Hermine, are you not going to say good-bye? Are you not going to speak to me again?"

She looked towards the little inlet where his boat lay awaiting him. She saw the signal of the sailor calling for his return. A cold, deathly premonition gathered around her heart, but she struggled against it, and at last raised eyes, that were clear if they were sad, to those of Maximilian.

For one moment, he met that supreme, absorbing gaze, then he placed her on the rock and sprang down the precipitous path to the water,

For Hermine Defourchet there had entered into the night a sorrow and a pain that would make her for ever remember this hour. She sat quietly watching the boat move over the rippling sea. She saw it glide out, far out of sight, but her eyes still lingered on the sheeny stir of water it had left behind. Finally, as the breeze from off the water rose and freshened over the cliff on which she was sitting, she rose and gathered her mantle about her, stood for an instant on the verge of the rock, then turned, and stepped slowly and sadly down the rugged way that led to her home. A faint jingle, as of steel against stone, broke on the soft air. Hermine turned suddenly towards her deserted seat.

A man, who felt that he could not conceal his presence, came from a sheltered nook behind and below where the two had been seated.

Hermine made a gesture of haughty surprise, and stood awaiting him. He paused when he reached her. He stood before her, a tall, well-made man, in close-fitting uniform, a sword dangling at his side. The girl's face was calm in a cold, chiselled scorn, that evidently stayed the words the young man was endeavouring to say.

At last Hermine exclaimed, "Well!" impatiently, and then looked for a reply.

"Well, mademoiselle, it seems I am very fortunate in meeting you; I had begun to despair of ever seeing you again."

"So you have been listening?" she asked.

"On the contrary, I have but just seen you. To what should I have been listening? Have you not been alone?"

His tone was very respectful, but his eyes gleamed at her, unmercifully searching.

She looked at his face before replying; then she said:

"Of course, you know that Monsieur Debray has just left me. From your position it is impossible that you should not."

He thought he detected a shade of supplication in her tones, and his answer came easier.

"Well, then, without jesting, I did see M. Debray just now. I came out here to try if I could not discover my father's ship; you know it was due last week."

"Yes. So you expected to see a vessel from between those two ledges of rocks? Your eyes are extraordinary, M. Morrel. If you had come up where I was, you would have had a much more extended view."

Hermine's eyes flamed, otherwise her face was quiet.

A flush of perplexity and rage mounted to the face of her companion. He bent his head for a moment, then raising it, said:

"Always harsh, always sarcastic with me, mademoiselle. Will it ever be otherwise?"

"Certainly not till you deserve it."

Hermine repented her answer as soon as it had left her lips. She compelled herself to say in more melodious accents:

"You will pardon my vexation, but, monsieur," and she approached him with a motion full of grace and dignity, "but I am really vexed that you should accidentally have overheard my conversation with Debray."

The word accidentally came from her lips with apparent unconsciousness; it smoothed the harsh lines that were coming on Morrel's face.

"And why vexed?" he asked, allowing the admiration he felt for her to be evident in his tones.

"Because you know you belong to the police-force, and you are a royalist; you will not consider it your duty to report what you have heard of such talk, will you?"

None would have guessed, in looking at the face of the girl, how vitally interested she was in Morrel's reply, how alarmed and troubled was her soul. Her heart beat furiously; it required all her power to prevent its pulses from causing a tremble in her voice. She folded her hands to prevent a tremor of the fingers.

"It is my duty, nevertheless," replied Morrel; "you would not counsel me to neglect that?"

"One may have mistaken ideas of duty, M. Morrel," Hermine said, meeting fully, for the first time in her life, the bold, sensual eyes of Edmond Morrel. He held her eyes for an instant by some evil power; when she lowered them she felt as though she had touched something polluting.

"And you would have me imagine, in this particular case, that I ought not to report?" Morrel asked, with a smile.

"It is a great favour, you will grant it to me?"

Hermine did not say that on his reply hung the freedom, perhaps the life of her lover, but she felt it in every pulsation of her palpitating frame.

It seemed to Morrel that he had never seen Hermine so bewitchingly lovely; she stood before him in the moonlight, her eyes phosphorescent, her slender white

hands interlocked, her cloak down from her neck, revealing a throat soft and white as any patrician's.

Morrel drew a step nearer; resisting her impulse to shrink back, Hermine stood still.

"*Mon Dieu!*" murmured Morrel under his breath. "Hermine," he continued, "for the sake of a gift from you, I will promise that I will not reveal Debray's intentions."

A faint scarlet came to Hermine's pale cheeks while she waited in silence for him to continue.

"It is only a trifle for you, Hermine; but for me—ah! for me," he exclaimed, with fervour—"for me it will be a thrill to remember and sigh for all my life! If I will not tell the authorities of your Bonapartist will you kiss me, Hermine?"

An imperceptible shudder chilled Hermine.

It was very hard for the girl to touch the lips of a man whose very presence gave her a sensation of loathing and evil.

"Swear that you will not inform against Debray!" she said.

He hesitated a moment, then replied:

"I swear it! Now!"

He extended his hand and she came near. He drew her to him with a certain fierce tenderness.

She never could forget the molten fervour of that kiss—it burnt on her mouth for months, and she could again feel the glances of the eyes that scorched her cheek then.

She sprang from his arms, paused for an instant to say, "Remember your oath!" and then ran with eager haste till she paused breathless at the gate of her house.

She leaned her arms on the paling, pushed back her hat from her heated face, passed her handkerchief two or three times over her lips, then breathed, in deep inhalations, the exquisite fragrance that pervaded the air.

The quiet—the redolent stillness of the place finally had its effect on her excited mind, for, with that facility of receiving impression on the senses that is so often characteristic of the children of the South, she received into her nature the sweet secrets of that balmy night, and for a moment almost forgot Morrel and the caresses she had endured. The night spoke to her of Maximilian, for it was tender and dear as his love.

For a week Hermine felt a painful doubt concerning the honour of Morrel. She knew how strong was the temptation to reveal to the reigning powers any symptoms of the existence of a Bonapartist faction. But the days passed on, and she knew that Maximilian must have reached Elba in safety, for she had heard no news of his capture; so Morrel had been true, for, indeed, no one but Morrel possessed any knowledge of his purpose.

Already beginning to rejoice at his success, she entered, with the heart-felt pleasure of a care-free French girl, into the preparations for the yearly feast her father gave at the anniversary of his marriage. The wealthy wine-maker's only gala-day was this summer commemoration of the happiest time in his life.

Now that the bride of his youth was dead, upon her daughter's head descended the crown of hospitality she had worn so gracefully. The kinsfolk who came from Marseilles and the adjacent towns, noted that the young Hermine had all her mother's graceful beauty, with something of the pride of her Catalan father. But there was only a musing thoughtfulness in her as she walked round the tables spread in the sumptuous vineyard. She stood for a moment looking through the vines at the glitter of the sea, with a vague thought in her mind of him who rode on its purple bosom. The laughter of approaching guests recalled her to the gay duties of the time.

Underneath the stately drooping of trees, and over-arched by the fair heaven of southern France, the company drank of old-vintaged wine and grew merry.

"And where is young Edmond Morrel? Is not he hidden to your feast?" said an old man at Hermine's right hand.

She looked at her father for the answer for which the company waited. He opened his mouth to reply, when Morrel himself emerged from the trees behind Hermine, exclaiming, as he advanced:

"Here he is, sufficiently unhappy that he is so late, but still not miserable, for here is a seat by the side of the divinity of the feast;" saying which, he sank into a seat by some chance left vacant by Hermine's side.

It could not be denied that he looked handsome and gentlemanly in his becoming uniform, and the eyes of the fair guests agreed among themselves that his curling black moustache was superb, and his large grey eyes irresistible.

He raised a glass of wine to his lips, bowing to Monsieur Defourchet as he did so. Hermine turned to him with a smile on her mouth, and a sinking faintness at her heart. The bright flush on his swart cheek deepened as he met her look; she were not a woman if she had not recognized her power over him.

"We had despaired of your presence, Monsieur Morrel," she said to him in a low voice.

"To despair is to regret, mademoiselle," he returned. "You have then regretted my absence? You do not know how I think of that." He leaned toward her as he spoke; their conversation had already assumed the appearance of a tête-à-tête, and the hilarious company forebore to interrupt them. Only Hermine's father appeared to notice them. He knew his daughter to be, like himself, a Bonapartist at heart, and he wondered if she so far forgot her fealty to love and loyalty as to fancy herself pleased with the gallant bearing of the young police-detective.

Hermine lowered her eyes at his words. The tone was too respectful for her to be offended, yet it raised a dread in her heart which alarmed her. She remembered the compulsory kiss she had given him, and involuntarily raised her eyes to his face as she thought of it. The expression she saw there told her that he was thinking the same thought, and that look of mutual remembrance made her writhe in a painful self-contempt.

Meanwhile, the revelry grew higher. From the lower end of the table, some one shouted enthusiastically:

"Here's a health to the king and all who love him!"

A boisterous jingling of glasses followed, during which M. Defourchet gravely raised his to his lips without quaffing a drop. Morrel drained his, and whispered:

"You are right! drink to nobody whom you do not love. But will you never cease adoring that emperor of yours?"

Hermine laughed as she replied:

"Don't tempt me to express treason! You know—"

She paused abruptly, for some one, with raised glass, was proposing the health of the brave "Captain Maximilian Debray."

She could not help a flush of love and pride as the health was drunk with noisy acclamations. Morrel's face paled and his lips darkened, as he said:

"You do not refuse to drink to him, mademoiselle?"

"No, why should I?"

As if in answer to her question, one of the guests replied:

"Be careful, messieurs, to whom you drink. They say a government cutter has overhauled Debray on his way to Elba, with despatches to Bonaparte."

Scathing, blasting as a lightning-stroke, those words fell upon the senses of Hermine.

Slowly, and almost unconsciously to herself, she lifted to her lips the glass she held. She felt that she needed some stimulant to enable her to bear the details that were coming. Morrel still sat by her side, drinking constantly.

"You are probably mistaken, my friend," said the cold, polite voice of M. Defourchet.

"Unhappily, no. I have authority for saying it. The *procureur du roi* of Marseilles was informed the day after his departure from the harbour. It is probable that he is secured in some provincial bastille by this time. Success to King Louis, I say."

Another clashing of glasses—another shout of approval.

Hermine felt her hands growing cold. She believed that the current of her blood would never beat bounding and red again—it was freezing round her heart. And the man who had done all this still sat by her side. She had honoured him with words of civility, almost of friendship. Her eyes blazed electricity as she turned them upon Morrel.

Some power made him able, for a moment, to meet them with unblenched front—but only for an instant; then he lowered his eyes before a flaming light which he could no longer bear.

"Monsieur—" she began, in a hard tone, which sounded to him as if coming across deserts of snow.

A voice from the heavens broke in and interrupted her—a terrific peal of thunder crashed over their heads, rolling in awful resonance afar out over the Mediterranean.

Then, for the first time, they saw the purple blackness of the clouds above them. Great drops of rain plashed into their half-filled wine-glasses, and fell on the upturned, startled faces.

The guests started away in disorder, and the courteous urging of Defourchet could not prevent their departure.

Hermine rose by the side of Morrel. He was moving away when he felt her hand upon his arm. He saw, rather than heard her say:

"Come with me!"

He looked in her face, and thought he was to follow some beautiful, avenging deity—some lovely Nemesis, as merciless as she was infuriating.

He bowed his head, but she was not content with that. She took his arm, and hurried with him through the fast falling rain.

They entered the house, nor paused till they reached the drawing-room, into which she conducted him, close-shutting the doors after their entrance. The terrible reverberations of the thunder shook the house—a blinding sheet of yellow fire played across the two in the darkened room.

Hermine stood by Morrel, and said:

"A fitting time, is it not, monsieur, for a talk like ours?"

In spite of his self-possession the strong man felt an irrepressible tremor through his frame. He looked at Hermine; he was fascinated; he could not remove his eyes. It seemed to him that she had never been so beautiful. Superb in her terrible grief and indignation, Hermine stood more glorious than she had ever been. Morrel felt with despair that he had never loved her so absolutely, so furiously as now. He could have fallen upon his knees before her, imploring for one smile from that exquisite mouth. Then he thought how sweetly she would look upon Debray, how devotedly she loved him. He could have told by the raging of his emotions that it was from jealousy, not perfidy, that he had betrayed her.

Should he admit that he had done so? Should he abase himself before this girl, and tell her that for passion for her he had ruined her love? The conflict in his soul was so fierce that he could form no decision. Perhaps Hermine, in the simple, womanlike fervour of her love, could have no perception of the heights and depths to which beauty like hers could urge a man. The French girl was too pure herself to understand fully how another could perjure himself in the forlorn hope of one day gaining her, or, at least, of removing a rival.

Again the building vibrated with the contending elements. Hermine drew nearer, her face shining palely, her eyes gleaming with strange transience.

"You do not answer me. Why do you think I brought you here? Not for the happiness, of seeing you, certainly. Do you know, monsieur, that your very presence makes me miserable? Do you ask why, then, do I remain with you? You know—because to your perjured heart my presence must be as tormenting as yours; and because you shall tell me all you know of Captain Debray's betrayal."

Notwithstanding her effort at self-control, her voice broke and faltered at that name. Morrel remained silent a moment; at last he summoned his voice and said:

"You are wrong, mademoiselle. Your presence, though you detest and despise me, can never make me unhappy. You do not know your own power—you can have no idea of the enthralment you can exercise, or you would have some pity for the victim of it; you would not so utterly condemn him."

In Morrel's tones there was the thrilling chord of passionate, despairing entreaty. He had let loose the chain that bound his utterance; he could not resist the tide he had set free.

Hermine raised her surprised eyes to his face; it was alive with a fury she had not known existed. She began to tremble; never in her life had she been so unhappy.

A change of feeling suddenly came over her; from the harsh, self-possessed mood which had just upheld her she suddenly passed to another.

She sank shivering on a couch; she pressed her hand to her heart to still its dreadful throbbings; her eyes became suffused with tears that were burning, and that could not fall.

Morrel's resolution was taken. He would not confess his treachery.

Anything for the far-off chance, for the possibility of some day winning her.

Thanks to him, Debray was probably effectually removed.

Time, that wonderful renovator of woman's heart, would efface the memory, and give place to the devotion of the present.

Though Morrel did not precisely reason thus, he felt it all in that one single instant in which he resolved that he would not tell it was he who gave the information.

Hermine sat still; she could not have spoken, she could hardly have moved.

Morrel thought that he would have shaken the universe to have made him happy—with him; it must be with him.

It was torment to think that any other man could console her, and that he could not.

He threw himself at her feet; his attitude was that of the most enthusiastic Frenchman, of the most despairing lover.

The hand he took she forgot to withdraw; indeed she could not have done so, so firm was his clasp. The tempest burst and clashed above them; Morrel felt vaguely and wildly that his tempestuous fury was for this hour—for him and Hermine.

His eyes flamed fire, his lips trembled as he spoke; it seemed, as he took Hermine's hand, that the electricity that filled the air was passing back and forth

through their clasped hands; and Hermine was conscious of the fine, penetrating thrill of the galvanism alive in the atmosphere.

At length Morrel spoke:

"Can you, then, be so unjust as to imagine that I informed against Debray? I, who pledged myself that I would not? I, Hermine, did you not give me a kingdom's price for the promise I gave you? Hermine, speak to me! answer me when I tell you it was not I." He pressed the hand he held, not daring to kiss it.

"Yes, I hear you. Are you sure it was not you?" Morrel could not repress a shudder. He was not sufficiently hardened to think, unmoved, of what he was doing. It is only when one is callous that one ceases to suffer.

"Sure! Oh, Heavens! Hermine, I could not so perjure myself. Do you not hear me say that I did not tell—that I am innocent?"

His accents were despairing; he released her hand and bent his head to his hands. They sat in silence. Finally he raised his head and said, sadly:

"Then you refuse to believe me?"

Hermine's heart was too pure and innocent to suspect him of crime he so earnestly disavowed.

"But who, then, could have given the information?" she said; "you alone knew his mission."

"It was very easy for some one else to have been among the rocks on the shore that night; you know how many people walk to the coast in the moonlight. Hermine, your doubt maddens and distracts me. How can I bear that you should think me dishonourable?"

His voice sank to a murmur; the time, the electrical air, his own excitement had so wrought upon him that he almost believed that which he wished her to think true. Hermine sat looking at him; he was still at her feet; his face was drooped, his magnificent black hair hung disordered over his forehead, his large grey eyes were raised to her face; they seemed to plead for that kindness—that belief—which she alone could give.

"I cannot but believe you; I suppose you are an honourable man. You gave me your oath—I will believe you." She paused for a moment, then exclaimed with passionate inflection, "But he who has done this has destroyed me! I can no longer expect happiness!"

Morrel now stood before her. He said, softly:

"Debray may yet be liberated; he may effect his escape."

"Do not talk thus to me," Hermine said, coldly; "you may go; I have that to bear which you cannot alleviate."

She rose as she spoke. Morrel did not speak; he bowed and walked out into the tempest, whose fury had abated. The soft, cooling fall of the raindrops refreshed his heated head. He removed his hat and stood beneath the dripping heavens. The sun had set, and night was coming on in cloudy blackness, for the shower had settled into a vast greyness which covered earth and sky. His soul still sighed heavily with his emotions; his heart palpitated—his lips burned. He extended his arms to the night; he longed to repose upon its cold bosom—to absorb its quiet and become soothed. Morrel turned his feverish eyes towards the obscured sky; he wished for one star, one ray of light.

Never before had he felt so disturbed—so miserable. He wandered all night along the sea-coast, longing, wishing for courage to precipitate himself into that rippling, tideless water. Out in the sea, black and motionless, gloomed the Château d'If. He watched it with bewitched eyes. He knew that within these walls were incarcerated political prisoners. Many a time had he been one of the escort, and had buried some victims deep in that horrible, living death. He wondered if Debray was there—that would be too dreadful. He did not wish Debray harm; he was only too weak to think of a lifetime with no hope of possessing Hermine.

And Hermine, unhappy, wretched as she was, was still less so than the despairing, sinful lover who paced the sands through the night-watches. She knew so well the irreparable fate of the intriguing Bonapartist, when taken by the terrified Royalists, that she already began to think of Maximilian as dead, or for ever shut out from her.

There is that in the hearts of some Frenchwomen which we, of a colder, more sedate clime, can hardly understand.

As Hermine stood by the open window, looking out upon the night upon which Morrel was roaming, she thought of her lost lover with such intensity—such vehemence, that he seemed almost present with her. Then, like a flood of bitterness, the realization of her misfortunes came to her, and her heart, after its profuse weeping, hardened stonily into a firm resolve—a resolution which the fiery-natured Provençal girl made as religiously as she would have made a vow to the Virgin.

In those hours of storm she consecrated her energies to discovery and revenge. She would know who had

betrayed Maximilian; and, since he was powerless, upon her lay the duty which he could not execute. Something of the Spanish, Catalan spirit of her father inspired her to this, and the ardent love of the southern meridian gave force to her resolve.

Day followed day, each one like its predecessor, and all laden with rich sunshine and sweet dew. Provence lay beautifully calm beneath its mellow sky. It folded its mantle of loveliness still closer, and smiled benignly on its lovers.

Hermine went in and out of her father's mansion, quiet and proud as she had always been.

Defourchet was silently waiting, he and his brother Bonapartists, for some sign or note from Elba, when suddenly, grandly and clearly, sounded the clarion call from Frejus. The emperor had landed—he was again among the Frenchmen who adored him.

Who but a Frenchman can tell of his triumphal march from the shores to the heart of France? Beautiful France again embraced her god. From Frejus to Melun—from Melun to Paris! Oh! it was worth a lifetime to have seen again the well-remembered nobility of face—to have the power of crying that long pent-up cry, "*Vive l'empereur!*"

His old and faithful friends sprang to his standard. Like the army they came *en masse* to his arms. The old days of chivalry were renewed and outdone. In the "Hundred Days" that followed men lived a lifetime. All the concealed Napoleonicists emerged from their chrysalides and sported the wings of imperial favour.

Hermine looked and longed for Maximilian. Now that the emperor was again in power she had a right to expect his liberation.

She did not know how much too short was that second reign of his—how, spurred on by innumerable duties, he could not know how friends of his were suffering.

Buoyed on the glittering sea of hope, Hermine sank to the depths of despair when the grand emperor's heart broke at Waterloo—broke beyond healing and comfort. She wished to fly to some desert, but her father could not leave the country which had nurtured him.

France had dreamed her wild dream of glory, and settled back again to the rule of Louis XVIII. The glorious pageant of the "Hundred Days" was gone by, and still Maximilian had not appeared. M. Defourchet told his daughter that he was dead, but Hermine waited for the day when he had said he would meet her on the shore where she had last seen him.

With woman's diligence and patient perseverance she still sought for the traitor who had so wounded her happiness, and she did not despair of discovering him.

Six months from that night she had stood with Maximilian here with the sea at their feet, and the lights of the city glinting below them. Now she was alone; but, if he still lived, he would move heaven and earth to reach her; she would not long be alone. She stood on the "windy headland," looking seaward. How different this night from then.

The warm radiance of a high-riding moon had then blessed them; now the heavens refused to smile on the solitary girl. A chill, sobbing wind was moving across the water and the shore; it did not shriek; it wailed lowly and dismally, and seemed to Hermine to carry on its wings the spirits of those shut out from Elysium.

She stood with clasped hands, her eyes eagerly striving to penetrate the shadowy darkness. From far out at sea there shone, here and there, the faint light of some ship's lanterns; some were so near that the wind brought the sound of the wash of the sea against their sides.

Hermine shuddered at the sound; she shuddered at every wail of the wind, every murmur of the waters, every hum of the city below her. The hours dragged into each other; whilst she stood with wearied limbs and fast sickening heart. Maximilian was dead! Her pale lips denied her the power of uttering the terrible fear of her soul.

At last she wrapped her cloak close about her and sat down. She leaned her head against the rock; her hair fell over her pallid cheeks, and the damp, weird wind caressed her with ghostly breath.

Underneath her cloak her fingers tightly interlaced over her slowly-beating heart, which at every flap of a bird's wing, fluttered wildly with a sickening expectation.

Suddenly the heart of the night beat out twelve vibrating strokes on the clocks of the city. Hermine heard it vaguely; it was late—he never would come—she never would see him.

It seemed to Hermine that she stretched her arms to the shadows and uttered a cry of anguish and despair, and that then there came a death-like chill of quietness—a strange calm came and brooded over her soul. Then, in the stillness, Maximilian came up the rugged path where she had last seen him walking; he uttered a cry of joy, and took her in his arms.

"You are very late," she said, looking sharply through the darkness to see that his face was haggard and thin.

His eyes pierced through her soul; she clung closer to him, repeating her words.

He spoke softly, murmuring with his lips close to her own:

"Not so late as you will be, Hermine, when I wait for you."

She closed his mouth with a kiss, whispering:

"I am always ready, Maximilian. I will go through the earth with you; you know it. But tell me, where have you been? Who betrayed you? Oh, I have moved mountains to discover! Like the Corsican, my friend, I will declare the vendetta against him, for he has almost killed me. Do you not see how thin I have grown?"

She smiled faintly and put back her hair from her face, then held up her transparent hands for him to see.

"My love has suffered as well as I," he answered. "Ah, Hermine, see, my blood is flowing for you!"

He opened his breast with trembling fingers, and Hermine saw the scarlet drops staining his linen.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried her quivering voice, as she pressed her handkerchief to his side. "They have murdered you! Oh, who has done it?"

With rapid movements she bound her handkerchief over the gash. She pressed closer to him. She thought him singularly silent.

"Will you not tell me who has done this?" she asked.

"My gaoler. When he discovered my disguise he attempted to kill me, but he could not because I was coming to you. God would not let me violate an oath in the service of true love."

"And you escaped! Now we will be happy!"

Hermine raised her eyes to heaven to thank the Providence who ruled there; but only impenetrable blackness gloomed above, and her gratitude died in the expression.

Her lover said, in grave tones of resignation: "No, expect not happiness. Those who have entered the Chateau d'Iff can never more be happy."

His head drooped, his hands hung heavily.

"Is it there you have been for these long six months?" asked Hermine, in a smothered voice.

He looked out towards the chateau, lifted his hand toward its black battlements, then, after pressing his lips with lingering tenderness to Hermine's mouth, he turned and walked slowly and weakly down the path which he had come.

Hermine sat and watched the boat which conveyed him; she heard the soft dip of the oars, but in the darkness she could only faintly discern the moving black object.

A blast of wind came sweeping from the sea down the rocky gorge. It shrieked as it passed by her. She rose and looked round her. The city clocks struck two. Had she seen Maximilian? She pressed her hand to her forehead; she recalled every word of the conversation, every intonation of his voice, every expression of his eyes.

She remembered the wound, and looked down at her hands to see if any of his blood remained there. They were white and spotless.

She looked round to see if he had left any signs of his presence. The hard rock would not retain foot-steps, but where he had stood she saw the glimmer of something white.

She stooped and took it; it was Maximilian's handkerchief, but it was the one that had been left there six months before, for the rains and sun had discoloured it.

Hermine could not have told why she was so sure this was Debray's, but she did not question it. She carried it tenderly down the rock to her home. As she entered the yard heavy drops of rain fell sullenly; they fell on her face, and it seemed to her they were drops of blood.

Hurriedly wiping them off, she walked softly into the house and up to her room. She murmured her prayers, and, lying down, she slept peacefully and sweetly. It seemed as though she had seen Maximilian, that she knew where he was, though he should never return. Her last thought before going to sleep was:

"In the morning I will ask my father to visit the Chateau d'Iff with me."

CHAPTER II

THEY found the governor of the chateau most polite and obliging, but, unfortunately, strangers could not visit the cells. He related fluently everything he could think of concerning the prisoners, but he mentioned no names; he knew them only by their numbers. No intuition told Hermine when he spoke of her lover.

They returned to Marseilles, dejected and despairing; Hermine began to believe the vision she had

seen was a premonition to tell her of his death. At the end of a year she almost thought of him with the soft, religious feeling which seems to be the twilight of love.

Morrel had seen her only occasionally, and apparently accidentally. He had risked too much to lose all by haste. There are but very few women who can see unmoved the continual devotion of one whom they have once rejected. There was something in the powerful eyes of Edmond Morrel that appealed in a strange way to Hermine.

Sometimes, as she wandered through her father's vineyard, she came upon Morrel, who lay with his handsome face upturned to the sky, the half-perceptible melancholy, which he could not wholly repress, giving a witchery which his countenance would otherwise have lacked.

He would not always speak to her—only rise to his feet and bow as she passed. But he finally exchanged a few words with her, and one day he walked by her side to the door of her house.

Hermine felt unaccountably agitated; without loving the man by her side she still felt the magnetism of his presence. At the door he took her hand with that peculiar clasp that tingled through her frame. She stood with drooped eyelids before him.

"Hermine, do not leave me; this night is lonely without you. Stay with me a few minutes. You will not regret to-morrow that you were kind to me to-night."

With cast-down eyes Hermine replied: "No; one never regrets a kindness. This hour should be perfect enough for you without me, for my mood does not harmonize with this quiet."

"I am glad of that, for neither is mine in unison. I feel a wild stirring of pulses; there is lightning coursing in my veins; its fire burns me with unquenchable longings. There, do you not feel it?"

He laid his fingers in the palm of her hand; she felt the electricity shoot and quiver in her nerves.

"Yes, you feel it," he murmured. "You absorb something of this vitality which is bounding oppressively in me. It relieves me; it cools and quiets me; your touch is like a snow-drop. You are kind."

Hermine snatched her hands away.

"But it does not relieve me!" she cried. "It frightens me and makes me intensely nervous! It possesses me with a life that is so intense as to be pain. You shall not have this power over me!"

He answered so calmly that it soothed her.

"You make a power and a mystery of that which is only a superabundance of vitality. Indeed, I am innocent. You shall not be angry with me. Good night."

For the next month she only met Morrel in the street, and, because she vividly remembered that evening in the porch, she bowed coldly and distantly to him. His salute was as reserved as hers.

At the end of that time she was walking on a high bluff by the shore one mid-day. The almost vertical sun blinded her eyes and oppressed her with a heated faintness.

She was on some household mission, so she hurried on, but she could not help gazing intently and longingly at the sea, with that rapt, intent gaze with which imaginative natures always look on the water.

At first, she did not discover a tiny boat drifting outward, away every moment further from land. When she did see it, her eyes were arrested by the figure of a child, asleep in the bottom of the boat. She recognized the daughter of one of her neighbours.

Her first womanish impulse was to scream; but she reflected, and did not yield to the desire.

She slid down the rock and ran along the sands, seeking for some boat in which she could row out to the child.

She was quite a distance from the city, or she might have applied for assistance there. She could not think of leaving the girl; she must watch her every minute.

She felt almost frantic with helplessness; faster she sped along the beach, searching every spot for one of those innumerable fishing row-boats that she had always thought lay almost as thick as pebbles on the shore. At last she saw one.

With a strength which surprised her, she dragged it to the water's edge, and jumped into it.

At first it stuck fast in the sucking sand, and all her power of muscle did not suffice; but at last, with a slow movement, it slid out on to the blue water.

She sat down exhausted, wiping her heated face, and looking vaguely at her bleeding hands; she had wounded them with the iron sides of the boat.

She took the oars and rowed towards the child; the little girl was further out than she had thought, but Hermine knew how to row on a calm day, and she pulled out vigorously.

Now and then a faint puff of air came caressing her hot cheeks; it did not blow steadily, but in short sob,

sure tokens of a coming storm, or the short-lived fury of a squall.

Hermine had lived too long near the coast not to know the foreshadowing of a gale on the Mediterranean, but she would not return to the shore now. She looked off to the horizon and saw for the first time the heavy, blue-black bank of cloud that seemed to rise and spread with every respiration of the wind.

There came a wild, eerie enjoyment to her; it seemed borne on the pulses of the wind, and to murmur to her the first happiness she had known for a year. She clasped to her soul the spirit of the storm, and revelled like another Thetis on the bosom of the water.

The waves grew blackish green, and curled foamy white as they fell into each other. She watched them intently; they allured her with bewildering beauty; some seductive merman might have been beckoning her to his palace, for she longed to yield herself for ever to the dread charms of the sea.

She did not forget to row; she was now within a few yards of the skiff; the child had waked, and was gazing around with eyes dilated by terror.

She saw Hermine, and stretched out her arms with an instantaneous smile of such divine trust that the tears came to Hermine's eyes as she saw it. She longed to feel one such sensation of entire belief and repose.

She brought her boat along by the side of the other, and carefully lifted the child into her own. It submitted passively, only saying:

"Are you going to take me to mamma?"

"I am going to try," Hermine said, touching her feverish lips to the child's cool forehead.

The squall was coming on in fearful earnest now. The frail bark slid down the wave-abyss as if every moment it would sink for ever.

Hermine's face became rigid with her striving. In her eyes there was the gleam of a hoped-for, coming glory, for she believed and wished that she should be drowned in this strife of the elements. It appeared impossible to reach the shore. She could now do nothing with the oars, she only sat still, holding the child fast in her arms. The heavens had darkened almost to the dusk of twilight.

Hermine looked towards the shore, and, beyond the line of foam, she saw, high up on the beach, a man running toward the water. He was dragging with him a light skiff which some of the wealthier fishermen used, when compelled in very rough weather to go out after their boats. Hermine watched him with indifferent eyes; with a strange caprice, she felt more interest in discovering who it was thus coming to their rescue than in the success of his attempt. She watched him as if she were an unconcerned spectator; not till she recognized him did she experience any other feeling. When he had launched his boat and was started toward her she saw it was Edmond Morrel. There were but few men on the coast who could manage a skiff with the skill of this shipowner's son. Hermine saw his black locks floating in the wind; she almost fancied she could read the fierce, resolute glance of his eyes. The desire of life again dawned within her. Like a revelation she realized how much was her life to this man who was braving death for her. On sprang his skiff; he did not raise his eyes nor look at her; he bent forward and would have taken her into his boat, she drew back and said:

"The child first."

He matched the little girl in his arms and placed her safely by him. Though he had taken hardly a second to do it, the two boats had drifted asunder; he made a gesture of fury and despair. Hermine clasped her hands and raised her supplicating eyes to heaven. By a gigantic effort Morrel brought his boat again to hers; he lifted Hermine and gave her a seat by the child she had tried to save. Then, devoting all his energies to his work, he at last brought them to the land. Once, when the sea broke over them, and the bark cracked with the strain, then Morrel had thrown his arm round Hermine, and she had whispered, "Oh, Edmond!" in a way that had flushed his face even then. The accent and the tone had nerved him still more to conquer his storm-foes.

The boat sprang up far on the beach, and the three left her, with the thought that death had been near to them. The child ran homeward, but Hermine, weak and unnerved by the violent efforts she had made, was hardly able to stand. Morrel supported her, murmuring confused words of thankfulness. Life seemed leaving Hermine; she had used all her strength in the endeavour to manage her boat, and the reaction left her almost without power to breathe. Her eyelashes fell softly on her cold cheek; the hands Morrel held had hardly a pulsation in them. She heard his exclamations of tenderness, but she could not reply; she could not even show that she heard them. Morrel grew terrified by her immobility and silence. He placed her gently on the ground; he knelt beside her, pressing her hands, and uttering words that would have called blushes to her face had not her blood been

frozen in her veins. He kissed her hands; as he did so she felt the burning, heavy tears that fell from his eyes.

Hermine struggled to speak words of consolation. Suddenly she felt his lips meeting hers; in that vehement kiss the crimson slowly flowed to her face. She opened her eyes to meet the ardent, irresistible gaze of Morrel. So concentrated and powerful was that look, that, for a moment, Hermine forgot all else in the world.

"Hermine!" the soft music of that word subdued her still more; it seemed as though she were in a trance of ineffable rapture. The wind yelled through the crags, the birds shrieked and flew rapidly by them, but the two only heard and saw each other. She lay supported by his arm, meeting his gaze with a softened, dreamy look in her eyes.

"Will you not speak? Are you going to kill me with those eyes, and with that sweet silence?"

He caressed her hand. She did not care to break this rapt stillness; she was yet too weak, physically, to wish to speak.

She essayed to say a word, but her voice failed her, so utterly prostrated was she. Having no power to reply, she smiled a smile of Paradise upon him.

Instead of reviving, she grew weaker; a purplish hue came around her mouth; the strain on her system had been fearful. She thought she was about to die, and that death was very sweet.

Then she forgot Morrel, and remembered the purer love of the lost Maximilian.

Morrel became inexpressibly alarmed. He thought of a flask he had with him, and he instantly poured some of the brandy between her paling lips. The *eau-de-vie* seemed to renew her existence. The colour came back to her mouth, the life to her eyes. She clasped Morrel's hand with feeble fingers, and whispered her gratitude.

"Do not tell me of gratitude," he said; "when I rescue that which is dearer than myself I deserve no thanks; so, Hermine, give me none."

"I obey you," she replied; but her face spoke what her voice was forbidden to utter.

After a few moments' silence, she said:

"I must try and walk now. I believe, with your help, that I can get home. It is very humiliating to be so unable to endure a great fatigue; to be so helpless as I have been to-day."

Morrel answered, coldly:

"You would add—and to be obliged to depend upon one whom you detest. It must be painful, indeed."

Hermine paused in her slow and difficult walk. The face she turned to him had an enchanting, shadowy, glory upon it. She withdrew her hand from his arm, and said:

"Edmond! with all the sweetness she had said it before, but there was reproach in the tone now. He replaced her hand.

"Give me the life I have saved," he said, with entreating voice. "Will you, Hermine?"

He listened with interrupted heart-beats for that answer for which he had perilled so much. It came, fulfilling his dearest dreams.

"It is yours."

Did no memory of Maximilian appeal to the constancy of the French girl? But what more remembrance could overpower the reality of so vivid a present?

Not till she was alone did the power of the time and of Morrel's presence grow fainter. She could not tell why the man whom she had refused a year ago had now inspired her with a passion that might so easily be mistaken for love. There was no logic in her woman's brain to explain to her this mystery. She reproached herself as false and treacherous, but she did not the less feel a feverish wish—an inexplicable longing for the presence and power of Edmond Morrel. She turned to him as the only being who could now give her happiness; who could administer a nepenthe, an excitement that should be for her what a noble love was to have been.

Four years after, one evening, in a magnificent suite of apartments in the Rue de Helder, Paris, there was a grand *soirée* given. Monsieur was a member of the Chamber of Deputies; he was a wealthy and fortunate man, and it was a matter of course that he should give *soirées*. The guests, who advanced to pay their respects to madame, could not fail to notice the exquisite beauty of her face and form, and the rare grace of her manner. It had needed only the polishing of a life in the city to perfect her into a type of the imperial woman. She was conscious of her beauty, and she used it to throw round one an airy spell of delight, so subtle as to defy analysis. The stranger, who liked to study faces as an index to character, would sometimes fancy he saw on madame's countenance an expression of disappointment, as if she were tired or sorry; but, if she conversed with him, so natural and heart-felt were her gaiety and kindness that he invariably thought his first idea a mistaken one.

On this evening, her husband approached her with a stranger who came from Italy—a man of letters who had brought introductions to the *élite* of Paris.

"Hermine," said her husband, "let me present to you Signor Romano, recently arrived from Florence. He will satisfy your mania for books."

"He will be most happy to satisfy you in any manner!" said Romano, bowing low before Hermine.

In her heart she felt the stirring and throbbing of years ago—it seemed very many to her. No disguise of hair, or beard, or absence could hide Maximilian Debray from the recognition of the woman who had once loved him. She saw, standing before her, the only man she had ever loved. She was conscious that he knew her, and yet she must appear to him like the stranger he feigned her to be.

Her practice as a woman of the world stood her in good stead now, but it did not prevent her voice from being constrained and cold, and her face from paling slightly. Otherwise, her features were serene and beautiful as ever.

"Your gallery of paintings, Madame de Morrel, is the most superb I have yet seen in Paris," Romano said, offering his arm that they might inspect them together.

For a second she hesitated; then she thought, with pride, that if Maximilian could endure a *tête-à-tête* with her, she had not less self-control than he. She did not think for how many weeks he had been preparing for this interview.

She rested her fingers on his arm, and the two sauntered slowly through the magnificent picture-gallery of Monsieur de Morrel.

"Madame, you have everything here which love and luxury could offer. You are one of the favoured few who possess the beautiful things of this earth, while you are yet youthful and can enjoy them with enthusiasm. When I look at you I feel sure that grief has never wept over you, or if she has, you have forgotten her tears."

He spoke in measured and frigid tones, but still with a sort of icy emphasis.

Hermine raised her soft eyes to his face; she was too proud to disclose that she felt the sarcasm of his words; while they were ranking in her mind she replied:

"You are partly correct; I am one of those fortunate women who appear to have happiness within reach, for my husband is devoted to me, and he has wealth with which to express his affection."

Her eyes turned with a serious kindness to the spot where her husband stood conversing. Debray saw that her glance was answered by one as kind. He wondered if he had returned, not only to find his betrothed married, but to discover that she was in love with her husband.

"You appreciate so fully the pleasures of your lot," Debray said, "that I am tempted to believe that Heaven has given you a perennially youthful heart in return for your girlish faith to him who is now your husband."

He uttered his sentences with the manner of a polite and interested stranger, and his eyes searched her face with a piercing, through deferential glance. Thanks to her acquired and natural self-command, she did not colour at his words or look, though both brought vividly to her memory a vision she had once had on the shore by Marseilles, when for her in all the world there seemed but one person, and that one Maximilian Debray.

She laughed lightly as she answered:

"Do not speak too surely of my 'girlish faith' as you are pleased to term it. You know how proverbially forgetful are maidens, and how fickle are men; so, I promise you, you will find in my life no marvel of romantic constancy."

Could she have known how drearily fell those gay words on the ears of her companion she might not have uttered them. They seemed to scatter all those vague hopes he had cherished, that, in sentiment and heart, Hermine might still be the Hermine of olden time. She felt piqued that he should thus address her, and she had not been a woman if she had been willing that this man of rock should see her moved by tender thoughts. Hermine did not see the expression of griefed surprise that came into his eyes at her manner and words. He turned abruptly from the picture which they had been looking at without seeing; and, saying,

"Your husband is seeking for you, I believe," he conducted her to Morrel, who was, indeed, wondering where his wife was that she did not welcome the guests who continued to arrive.

"Signor Romano admires our paintings as much as we do, ourselves, Edmond," said Hermine, carelessly toying with her hair as she spoke.

Morrel bowed and said:

"I should have known his artistic eye would have appreciated them. Have you shown him that favourite of mine?"

Debray stood listening to his host without hearing

a word he was saying. He was wondering at that ready tact, which was almost duplicity, which Hermine employed. Rousing himself at the last words of Morrel, he said:

"I beg you, by all means, to allow me to see your favourite. Madame de Morrel, you will again be my guide?"

She could not resist the fate that seemed leading her on; she led him to a skilful painting of a coast scene. It was a heavy storm of wind: the monster clouds came down and met the sea, and on the sea was a boat, wherein sat a girl and a child; in the white, sad face of the woman, with its streaming, storm-beaten hair, observers had fancied they traced a resemblance to the countenance of Madame de Morrel. A man was rowing towards her, but his head was bent and his face hidden. Debray looked at it attentively; then, without a word of comment, he turned suddenly to a small picture that hung in a darkened corner, and asked:

"And whose favourite is this?"

Before she thought, Hermine had said:

"It is mine."

It was only a rock on the shore of France, by the city of Marseilles; on the summit of the rock stood the figure of a female, her cloak wrapped about her, her face indiscernible in the dusk. Debray's hands grew cold as he looked; his eyes misted with a sweetness he had feared he never should feel again. He waited till he had control of himself; then he turned and said:

"Your taste for paintings is peculiar."

Again he led her back to her husband, and she saw him no more that evening.

Her married life had been happier than she had dared to hope. Morrel had always preserved the reverence and love he had always felt for her. She feared the presence of Debray as one who wished to be faithful in thought to her husband. She had soon discovered that it was not love that she felt for him, and the discovery made her realize still more deeply that it was love she had offered to Maximilian. Now, in his re-appearance, she feared the destroyer of the peace in which she had reposed. Notwithstanding his self-possession on that night of their first meeting she had not failed to see that the dream he had once dreamed might again be awakened to a vivid life.

So, while she expected her superficial calm of life to be destroyed by meeting Debray in society, she prepared to meet him with that woman-of-the-world air which conceals everything.

But it was not to be her lot to exercise her self-command in interviews with Debray; the fate which heaven had decreed for her she was soon to meet.

A fortnight after the *soirée* of the senator, Hermine was riding with her husband. With characteristic munificence, he had, upon her birth-day, presented her with a luxurious new carriage, and the two were trying its appointments. They had left the *barrières* behind them, and were riding towards their country-house at Anteuil.

There are but few women who are not saddened by the recurrence of a birth-day. To Hermine it brought a nameless regret—a sorrowful longing for that happiness which, as a girl, she had thought would be hers before she had lived so many years. Leaning back in the carriage she became so absorbed that she did not, at first, notice the violent motion of the horses. They had sprung aside at some unusual object in the street, and were now racing down the way, unrestrained by the driver's efforts.

Hermine suddenly noticed the alarmed look of her husband. He had leaned from the window, and discovered, from the crowded state of the street, that, unless the horses were quieted, they would be thrown from the carriage.

He clasped Hermine's hand, and the two sat with pale faces, awaiting the decision of their doom. All at once, they felt the speed of the horses suddenly arrested. Precipitated rudely back on the seat, they were almost breathless.

The driver sprang to the ground at a motion from the stranger who was hanging to the horses' heads. He took his place at their panting mouths, while the man who had rescued them ran to the carriage-door and opened it. It happened that he came to the side at which sat Madame de Morrel.

He extended his arms, exclaiming:

"Hermine, it is I!"

He lifted her to the ground, and turned to hold back the door for Morrel.

Just as the latter was placing his foot on the step the retive and furious horses escaped from the coachman's grasp and dashed on. The heavy wheels of the chariot passed over Morrel's body, and in an instant the treachery of years ago was avenged.

He was dead!

C. E.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY.—The discipline is summary and rigid. A very great distance is maintained by the officers towards their men, and extreme respect is

exacted from all ranks towards their superiors in every degree. The punishments for ordinary offences are—caning, fatigue duty, and extra guard, but imprisonment is not employed as a minor punishment. Loss of a certain number of years' service is applied for serious offences, and proves one of the most powerful checks upon misconduct. But the Russian soldier has many reasons to be contented with his lot. The feudal system still exists in Russia, and the peasant, though not essentially a slave, is yet completely bound to the place of his birth. Now, the moment he puts on the military uniform, he is emancipated from feudal service, and when discharged at the end of his period, returns to his home a free and independent member of the community.

DEVOTION.

SINCE last I gazed upon thy face,
So beautiful and fair,
Some dream of grief has o'er thee stole,
And stamp'd thy brow with care;
And Sorrow's sombre shadows have
Sweet o'er thy gentle breast,
And dimm'd thine eyes, within whose depths
The sunshine lov'd to rest.
But still my love remains the same
As in the days of yore;
'Twould be my death to love thee less,
'Twould kill to love thee more.

I know that since we said farewell
That thou hast loved in vain,
Thy idol has been shattered, and
But ruins now remain;
Well, be it so—let not the past
Remembered be by thee,
But bury all its memories
In dark Oblivion's sea;
And from the wreck of blasted hopes
Let happiness arise,
And the bright stars again shall shine
Within Faith's golden skies.

The love that once I offer'd thee
Seemed worthless in thine eyes,
But now that Time has proved its truth,
Wilt thou that love despise?
Oh, do not weep, and say that thou
Unworthy art of me,
The past is all forgot, and I
Am happy, love, in thee;
Come to my arms—thy lips I press,
At last thou art mine own;
And thy fond love in days to come,
Shall for the past atone.

F. J.

INNS OF COURT HOTEL, LONDON.

THE works connected with the erection of this building have been commenced. The site extends from Holborn to Lincoln's-inn Fields. The hotel will have a principal entrance on each front, and will be in two large blocks, connected together across Whetstone Park by covered corridors.

The accommodation provided by the plans consists of two spacious coffee-rooms, one fronting into Lincoln's-inn Fields, 70 feet by 80 feet; and another into Holborn, 56 feet by 23 feet; and a ladies' coffee-room, 34 feet by 24 feet.

There will also be provided a drawing-room, 56 feet by 23 feet; a billiard-room for three tables, 70 feet by 21 feet; a smoking-room, overlooking the conservatory, 42 feet by seventeen feet; fourteen private sitting or arbitration rooms, varying in size from 27 feet by 21 feet to 18 feet by 12 feet; and upwards of two hundred bedrooms.

On the ground-floor, a large interior court, 70 feet by 40 feet, is a prominent feature, giving light and air to the centre of the Holborn block. This will be roofed in over the first-floor windows, with iron and glass, and rendered attractive by symmetrical arrangement, and by the introduction of plants, flowers, and a centre fountain; and round it are arranged many of the principal rooms.

Hydraulic lifts for passengers and luggage, and also for domestic purposes, will be fitted up in each block, by Sir W. Armstrong and Co., of the Elswick Works; and the cooking apparatus will be by Messrs. Jeakes and Co.

The buildings will be fire-proof throughout, from floor to roof, on Messrs. Fox and Barrett's principle; and the four principal staircases will be of Portland stone.

Externally, the principal fronts in Holborn and Lincoln's-inn Fields will be in Bath and Portland stone, relieved by columns of polished red granite and serpentine marble shafts. The elevations are in the Italian style of architecture, and rise to a height of more than 80 feet.

The building contract has been taken by Messrs.

Hill and Keddell, of Whitechapel, for £65,000; and the outlay on the site and buildings will exceed £100,000. The works have been designed and will be carried out under the superintendence of Messrs. Lockwood and Mawson, architects; and it is intended that the building shall be opened in May, 1865.

CLOTHING FOR THE DANISH ARMY.—A number of orders have been received in this country for clothing for the Danish army. The cloth is a strong article, greyish in mixture, mostly Cheviot.

A NOVEL ARRANGEMENT.—It may be interesting to searchers into the development of trade, to know that there is a shop in Paris which supplies a new shirt to any customer who leaves his dirty one and pays ten sous to boot.

ANOTHER ROYAL ALLIANCE.—The heir to the throne of All the Russias is said to be on his way to Copenhagen to propose for the hand of Princess Maria Dagmar, daughter of the king, and of course sister to the Princess of Wales.

THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT.—It is thought that, if no misfortune occurs, Lord Palmerston will let Parliament die out a natural death, and his lordship will not voluntarily become a parliamentarian. The autumn of 1865 is the exact extent of its life.

DUST, OH!—In London, the price of "Breeze," for the purpose of making bricks, has risen to 7s. 6d. per load, though but a few years ago it was scarcely saleable at 1s. 6d. per load. In consequence of this increase of value, the dust-contractors are now paying for the dust in many parishes, instead of, as formerly, being paid for removing it.

BIBLIOLATRY.—Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis," a small duodecimo of forty-eight pages, printed at Edinburgh in 1627, was sold in London recently for the sum of £115. It was the property of Mr. Jeffries, the bookseller, of Bristol. Only one other copy of this edition is known, and that, unlike the present, is imperfect.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIME passed on, and Alice slowly struggled back to life with many fluctuations of hope and fear.

All access to Vernor was denied to his friends, an Mr. Digby could only ascertain that he had not been thrown into the common prison.

It was known that he possessed information as to the extent of the conspiracy against the Government which those in power were most anxious to secure, and it was not their policy to risk his death by exposing him to the infectious malady that raged among the prisoners before gaining what they were so desirous of obtaining. Their object once attained, his fate would become a matter of as much indifference as that of the scores who were daily led to execution.

Vernor was fully aware of this, and he tenaciously preserved the secret that was of such vital importance to himself. He baffled all the efforts made to treat with him by preserving a sullen silence, for he knew the treachery of those in whose power he was thrown, and he reserved the communication he fully intended to make, as the price of his own life. If he was induced to make a premature disclosure he knew that pledges would be broken on the side of the court, for he understood the character of James too well not to be aware that one so deeply implicated with Monmouth as himself would never be allowed to escape if any means could be found to condemn him.

The room in which he was confined was in the gaoler's house, and had sometimes been used for the incarceration of persons of more importance than the common class of criminals. It was so well secured that there was no possibility of escape. The walls within were plated with iron, and the windows were heavily grated; and hour by hour, Vernor paced to and fro within its narrow limits like an enraged wild animal, bitterly cursing the fate which had led him thither.

Misfortune did not improve this votary of self-indulgence, and the days he passed in that weary solitude, with the doom of death looming before him, hardened his reckless nature, and rendered him ready to embrace any chance of escape from the fate that menaced him.

Gerald set out for Taunton as soon as the letter of his mother detailing the calamities which had fallen on the family reached him, and her sad heart was cheered by his presence, though he could give her little hope as to the result of his cousin's trial.

Gerald had matured into a noble and true man, with that conscientious sense of responsibility to a higher power which is the best balance to character. His large, clear, grey eyes had the serene expression of conscious power, for he felt within himself the stirrings of a great intellect, and he knew that if life

and health were granted to him he would make a name for himself, which posterity would not willingly let die.

Young as he was, Mr. Clyde, recognizing his great legal abilities, had already associated him with himself in the defence of several important criminal cases. He was gifted with brilliant eloquence, and the silvery periods that flowed from his persuasive tongue often moved the jury to visible emotion.

After many difficulties had been overcome, Gerald succeeded in obtaining access to Vernor, as his counsel in the approaching trial; but he found his cousin cold and uncommunicative; he seemed unwilling to owe his acquittal to the efforts of Gerald in his defence, if such a result could be hoped for from the most strenuous exertions in his favour.

The young advocate returned from the interview disheartened and oppressed, and when Ethel eagerly inquired into the state of Vernor's mind, he could give her little comfort or encouragement for the future.

In her deep sorrow Ethel seemed to Gerald even more attractive than in her sweet childhood, and he resolutely held himself aloof from the fascination of her presence as much as he consistently could. He often found her with his mother, and the deep interest with which she inspired him was unconsciously betrayed in his manner, until Ethel's own heart took the alarm; for she felt that this renewal of daily intercourse was reviving her early feeling of preference for him, and she knew that she was no longer free to love him. She soon found a pretext for retiring to the room of Alice when he called, and Gerald understood and appreciated her delicate sense of propriety.

He felt that it was painful to see her daily, and know that she was beyond his reach, yet he had come there with the hope of being able to save the life which stood between her and himself; he would use his utmost efforts to do so, and he did not despair of ultimate success.

Vernor had been in prison a week when, late at night, he heard the grating of the lock of his door, and the gaoler came in. He spoke in guarded tones:

"I am glad that you are still up, Mr. Methurn, for there is a lady here who has something of importance to say to you. I brought her here at this hour, because it must never be known that she has visited you. You understand?"

"Yes, I fully comprehend that you have been heavily bribed to admit her," he sardonically replied; "but I am not going to betray you. Any interruption to the solitude of this dreary place is welcome. Let her come in."

The man nodded, stepped to the door, and ushered in a tall figure in the deepest mourning, with a heavy crape veil falling nearly to her feet.

Vernor had expected to see either his aunt or Ethel, but his visitor was much taller than either of them, and he said:

"There must be some mistake; this lady cannot wish to see me."

A sweet, sad voice came from beneath the shrouding folds of crape, which said:

"You are certainly Mr. Vernor Methurn, and I must see you alone a few moments."

She made a slight gesture of command toward the gaoler, who bowed respectfully and left the room, carefully closing the door behind him.

Vernor drew forward the only chair the apartment contained, and she sank upon it with a weary sigh. The curiosity of the young man was aroused, and he impatiently waited for her to lift her veil and reveal her features.

There was something familiar in the outline of the figure before him, but he could not recall when or where he had before seen it.

She presently said:

"You do not recognize me, Mr. Methurn? Yet how should you know the phantom of what I lately was? Behold the work of the few past weeks of suffering and despair."

With a quick motion she threw aside the crape that concealed her features, and he beheld a face so white—so fixed in its expression of despair, that one might have deemed it that of the dead, but for the large wild eyes that gleamed from it with a restless fire that seemed bordering upon insanity.

Vernor beheld the ruin of a beautiful woman on whom he had last gazed in the pride of ambition and passion.

He exclaimed:

"Lady Wentworth! How came you here? What brings you to see me?"

"I am permitted to come hither through the compassion of the gaoler, who was once in my father's service. He listened to my prayer to see you, and you know why I have come, Mr. Methurn. They wait at Whitehall for that which you alone can furnish to give a colour of justice to the inhuman sacri-

fice they meditate. The king will not condemn his nephew to death unless that last aggravation is given. You have in your possession a paper prepared by Monmouth's own hand, in which he accuses James of the murder of the late king. I came hither to entreat you by all his past kindness not to destroy your friend and benefactor."

Vernor's face did not change. It wore the impassive coldness which always characterized its expression when his course was determined on. He calmly said:

"I am sorry, madam, that you should have taken the trouble to apply to me for what is no longer in my possession."

"What has then become of it?" she gaspingly asked. "Oh, man—cruel, heartless man—if you have given this up for your own behoof, if you have sacrificed that noble, noble head to serve your own purposes, the curse of blood will yet fall upon you. I denounce it against you; I will cry to heaven for retribution upon you, even as David cried to the Lord for vengeance upon his enemies; and, mark you, his prayers were always answered, because they invoked a righteous punishment."

Vernor saw that the speaker was half-maddened, but his respect for her sufferings did not prevent him from replying with a sneer:

"Truly, madam, your prayers are uncalled for, for I am in as evil a case as any man need care to get in. The devil himself could not do me a worse turn than I did for myself when I joined the cause of Monmouth. As to the paper you refer to, I did not consider it of much importance, and I kept it about my person. The manifesto put forth under the duke's authority distinctly accuses his uncle of many crimes as dark as the one you speak of."

"But," she interrupted, "Monmouth can reasonably deny all knowledge of what was in it, for it was drawn up by Ferguson; but if he is known to have reiterated the charge himself, it will be fatal to him."

There was a faint accent of regret in the tones of Vernor, as he replied:

"I am sorry that I did not make the distinction myself, but I neglected to do so. When I concealed other papers of importance relative to those who were implicated in the late rebellion, I overlooked this one. It was stitched in the lining of my coat; and only yesterday, Kirke ordered a stricter examination of my garments to be made, in the hope of finding a clue to those from whom money can be extorted as the price of their safety. He found the paper you wish, and by this time it is doubtless on its way to Whitehall."

There was a faint cry, and Lady Wentworth sank back insensible.

The gaoler came in, and after throwing water upon her rigid face, she slowly recovered. She breathed a long, shuddering sigh, and after a few moments arose, drew her sable robe around her, and spoke in strangely broken tones:

"The friend that has trusted you, you have betrayed to death! Had you been faithful to the man you professed to love, that paper would have been destroyed at the risk of your own life. I tell you, Vernor Methurn, that I would have made you rich! I would have given you all—all save a bare pittance, from my great wealth, to have made me mine. You are mercenary—you are extravagant! I would have gratified your avarice to the utmost limits of my fortune if you had put it in my power to save him whom I love beyond expression. Now, the scaffold is reared! His head will fall, and you will be his executioner! You will also be mine, for I shall not long survive him."

Vernor's irritable temper was aroused by these reproaches, and he haughtily said:

"If you were to accuse yourself as his destroyer it would be nearer the truth. Madam, who tempted Monmouth to leave a safe asylum but you? Whose ambition soared to kingly state for him but yours? As to your offers of wealth, a man who expects to be allowed but a few more weeks of life can well afford to despise them!"

"True—true," she vaguely muttered; "I tempted him—I urged him on, and now, I can but die with him."

She made a slight gesture of farewell, and leaning heavily upon the arm of the gaoler, left the room.

A few more days and Monmouth perished on the scaffold, from which his vindictive uncle was resolute he should not escape. The broken heart which had clung to him with such passionate fondness lingered on yet a few months. In the spring of the following year, the parish church near which was situated the ancient and stately seat of the Wentworths was opened to receive the coffin of the young baroness, over which a magnificent monument was erected; but in the neighbouring woodland was for years one of far deeper interest to those who visited the spot—her name carved upon a tree by the hand she loved too well.

Vernor had spoken but a portion of the truth to

Lady Wentworth. In an interview which took place between himself and Kirke before they left the Priory, he had surrendered the important paper as the price of better treatment than was accorded to those implicated in the late rising. To wring from him the names of the men of wealth who were secretly pledged to join Monmouth's cause was now the object of the two relentless harpies who had been sent to Somersetshire to spread terror and desolation in their path. But Vernor was resolute to yield them up only in the last extremity, as he firmly believed that his life would be granted in return for the information he could give.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE dreaded assizes came on. Jeffreys entered Taunton in the usual state, accompanied by the other judges, all robed in scarlet, and escorted by a troop of horse. The pageant filled all hearts with dread, in place of being, as heretofore, an occasion of festivity. He issued orders to have the court-room hung with red, as a hint that no mercy was to be shown to those who had dared to revolt against the rule of James Stuart.

It is not our purpose to describe the atrocious and disgraceful scenes that were enacted within its walls, nor to dwell upon the judicial murders perpetrated by this merciless man. History relates them in all their horrors, and in its pages the name of the chief actor in them is bequeathed to eternal infamy.

Vernor was brought up for trial on the third day of the assizes; Gerald appeared to defend him, but the judge, after listening to the charges against the prisoner, scarcely allowed his counsel to speak a few sentences before he roared out:

"Stop that, sir. How dare you attempt to defend such a double-dyed villain as that? Take care, Mr. Advocate, or I shall order you under arrest yourself. It is treason to speak in defence of a man who is known to have been the personal friend of Monmouth—who landed on these shores with him in armed rebellion against the king, and who is no doubt now plotting new mischief. But I'll take care of that; I'll send him where he may raise an insurrection among the fiends of the Inferno. I'll deal with him, I'll warrant."

Jeffreys' inflamed visage, coarse features, and air of swaggering authority, coupled with such insulting language, were a strange sight in an English court of justice. Gerald respectfully remonstrated:

"But, my lord, the law of the land guarantees a man a fair trial for his life, and you refuse to hear any extenuating circumstance. I wish to—"

"Go to the demon with your wishes! What do I care for them! I am here to punish traitors, not to hear them defended, and that man at the bar is one of the vilest among them. Speak another word, at your peril! A pretty pass I should come to if every young jackanapes of a lawyer is to take up my time listening to his balderdash. The evidence is dead against the prisoner. Jurymen, you know your duty, and, mark me, you shall perform it."

Frightened by his menacing tones, the jury hurried out to go through the farce of consulting together, when it was evident that the fate of the prisoner was already decided. Gerald again attempted to speak a few words, but, aroused to a pitch of insane fury, Jeffreys ordered him to be removed from the court.

This mockery of a trial was but a specimen of hundreds of others, from which men were hurried to their fatal doom. The jury remained out longer than the judge deemed necessary, and he again stormed out:

"The case does not admit of five minutes' deliberation. Go to them, Mr. Sheriff, and tell them my time is not to be trifled with in such a manner."

Thus pressed on, the jury returned, looking scared and bewildered. The foreman did not immediately speak, and Jeffreys thundered out:

"Come, sir—what have you to say? Are you dumb, or have you lost the little sense nature bestowed on you?"

"My lord," stammered the man thus addressed, "we find the prisoner guilty, but recommend him to the mercy of the tribunal."

"Mercy," repeated the judge, with an ominous grin. "That's an attribute I don't patronize where rebels are concerned. You attend to your duty, and I'll attend to mine."

He drew on the cap of condemnation, arose and said:

"I sentence you, Vernor Methurn, to be taken to the place of execution to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and there hanged by the neck until you are dead—dead—dead, and may all traitors meet with a like fate—Amen."

Vernor heard the sentence with more equanimity than might have been expected. He became slightly pale, but he did not remove his eyes from the face of the speaker, and he merely bowed his head in submission to the sentence.



[LADY WENTWORTH VISITS VERNOR METHURN.]

He looked around the court as he arose to have, and his eyes encountered those of Melchior, who dares purposely placed himself where he must see him. There was a flash of exultation in those of the gipsy, which was replied to by one of scorn and loathing from the condemned man.

Gerald was waiting for him at the door, and he was permitted by the gaoler to accompany him to his prison. When they were alone Gerald said with emotion:

"I would gladly have served you to the best of my ability, Vernor, but this brutal creature who has been sent hither to sit in judgment on better men than himself, would not permit it. My heart is wrung with sorrow and indignation at witnessing such a prostitution of the forms of justice."

"I knew that you would not be permitted to help me, Gerald. They have their own ends to gain by condemning me, but I have the means of purchasing my life from them. If I cannot pay money to the mercenary wretches, I can point out to them those who can, on whom they have hitherto been unable to pounce."

"And will you—*you*, a Methurn—do this, even to save your life?" asked Gerald, in an excited tone. "Oh, Vernor, even death were preferable to such dishonour."

"If your life were the penalty, perhaps you would think differently," he sullenly replied. "I do not give over any one to the executioner. I merely surrender into the hands of these cormorants the power to extort money from those who merit punishment as much as I do. If I comply with their demands I shall be permitted to go into temporary exile. Ethel I give up to you. I never loved the poor child, and now that her ruin can be laid at my door, I like her less than ever. Her presence would be an everlasting reproach to me; you can now easily get her released from her bonds, and I hope you will be happy together. She knows that I am not in love with her; that I have scarcely the means to live myself without taking on myself the burden of her support."

"She has property in Holland, and she relies on that as a means of subsistence for you both."

Vernor uttered a loud whistle.

"That is moonshine. The fact is, I led Sir Hugh to believe that the real estate she inherited had not been tampered with. I had my own reasons for doing so; but I have really mortgaged the whole of it, and my creditors will seize on it as soon as they hear of what has happened here."

"Then of all the property bequeathed to her by her uncle, there is absolutely nothing left?" asked

Gerald, in alarm. "Oh, Vernor, how could you act thus by a minor thrown so completely in your power?"

"If you had been in my place, with the temptations that were thrown in my way, you would have done no better. I lost at the gaming table; but now I understand the tricks of the gentry that fleeced me, and when I have a chance I will return the compliment. But living by one's wits is rather a precarious method of getting along, and I cannot think of burdening myself with a wife to whom I am more than indifferent. If Lord Clifton were to die, I might consent to keep my troth, if I could make my peace with the Government. Do you know if he is likely to step out of the world before long?"

Gerald looked at the fair, handsome face before him, with its light blue eyes and sunny hair—its expression of reckless defiance; and he felt that words would be thrown away on one so callous to all the tender feelings that ordinarily sway mankind. Vernor thought of himself alone, and he was careless as to who might know it.

His cousin gravely replied:

"Lord Clifton's health has improved of late. He was married last month to a lady to whom he has long been deeply attached. His father refused his sanction to the marriage, and it was deferred till after his death. Thus Ethel has little prospect of now succeeding to her grandfather's estates."

"So much the worse for me!" said Vernor, indifferently. "The thing is settled, then. You may take Ethel yourself, and live like Darby and Joan together. She'll suit you as a wife much better than such a wild good-for-nothing as I am; and I know very well that you have always had a jealous corner in your heart because I appropriated your ladybird. But there is no harm done! Ethel never cared for me half as much as for you, though the poor thing has such straight-laced ideas of duty that she tried to do so with all her heart."

Gerald made no reply to this, but after a pause said:

"Vernor, do you know that to raise the fine which will be exacted of Ethel, she will be compelled to mortgage the annuity left her by her grandfather, and thus leave herself no means of support for several years to come. Is there absolutely nothing left of her fortune?"

"Nothing—have I not told you that 'tis all gone? Let her apply to her uncle—in such a strait he will surely help her."

"I am afraid he will not. My earnings as yet scarcely enable me to live, and my mother will have

to pay a fine herself, which will cripple her resources."

Vernor fretfully said:

"What is the use of troubling a man in my position with all these annoying details? I am ruined—a prisoner with the doom of death hanging over me; is not that enough for me to bear, without having other people's troubles thrust on me? Ethel is better off than I am. She'll find friends to help her. I am as sorry as you can be that the money is all gone; but it is a stubborn fact that it is spent, and talking won't alter it."

At that moment the gaoler entered and warned Gerald that the time allowed for the interview had expired. He arose, and as he wrung the hand of the prisoner, he whispered:

"Dear Vernor, be true to yourself, and do not disgrace the name you bear by treachery."

Vernor clasped his hands around his throat and recklessly said:

"I couldn't stand that, Gerald. Don't ask me to let my neck be squeezed to save the purses of a few rich men from a similar process."

He laughed aloud at the expression of his cousin's face, and went on:

"Tell Ethel that I have not played my last card yet, and it is sure to win. Since she no longer represents the queen of diamonds, I leave her to you as the queen of hearts. Good-bye, Gerald; don't look so shocked. Nature made me a gay galliard, and she did not encumber me with a superfluity of sentiment, as she did you and my quondam lady-love."

The door closed upon him, and Gerald took his way to the residence of Mr. Digby in a strange whirl of feeling. The hardness shown by Vernor amazed and shocked him, in spite of his previous knowledge of his character; his own high-toned and sensitive nature was so different that he was at a loss to comprehend the windings of the subtle and unscrupulous spirit that swayed his cousin.

The little feeling Vernor had betrayed for Ethel, alienated the sympathy of Gerald from him more than all the acts of his life of which he had been cognizant. He began to feel with Mr. Digby, that if she could sever herself from him altogether, it would be far better for her future happiness.

The news of Vernor's condemnation had already reached those who were so deeply interested in his fate, and Gerald found his mother and Ethel in the greatest distress. What he communicated to them with reference to Vernor's hopes, did not tend much to lighten their affliction.

(To be continued.)



[THE SECRET PANEL.]

MRS. LARKALL'S BOARDING SCHOOL.

By the Author of "Man and His Idiot."

CHAPTER XLII.

AFTER THE AMBASSADOR'S BALL.

Duke.—This gentleman speaks fairly.

Duchess.—

No
Old Play.
Not if fair thoughts are of fair speech a part.

THE footstep which startled Gertrude Norman as she sat in the apartment in the hotel in Paris, was that of a stranger to her. She rose in some surprise when the servant announced "Monsieur Lenco," and that surprise was not diminished as the visitor walked in before she had time to deny herself to him.

She had never seen the little man with the white hair and bilious skin, with the yellow eyeballs without lashes, and the large, flabby mouth that revealed toothless gums. He had not attracted her attention at the ambassador's ball, and, of course, she knew nothing of what had passed between him and Roland Hershaw in the cab.

Monsieur was the first to speak.

"Ten thousand pardons, madam," he said, bowing profoundly, "for this intrusion at so late an hour."

"It is probably Captain Disney whom you came to see," suggested Gertrude.

"No; on the contrary. 'Tis at the captain's request that I came," was the answer.

"At his request?" asked Gertrude, with surprise.

"Precisely."

"Something has happened then? An accident?"

"Not in the strict sense of the word."

"I comprehend. He has embroiled himself in some quarrel—he has been challenged—and you come to warn me of his danger?"

Lenco smiled.

"Love stimulates the imagination," he returned, with a bow; "but it is my happy privilege to assure you that, in this instance, your fears are unfounded, madam. No danger threatens the brave captain—only a little inconvenience."

"Pray explain yourself!" cried Gertrude.

"In a word, then," returned Lenco, smacking his lips, and making a noise as if chewing his own words, "he has had the misfortune to lose his passport. Without that, as you know, he cannot quit Paris, and he contemplated quitting it at once, did he not?"

"I believe so," said the young wife thrown off her guard.

"Precisely. So I understood him, though he did not favour me with his destination."

"Berlin, I believe; though I am not in his confidence."

"Indeed?"

"That is so."

"One would suppose, then, that his determination to quit Paris was very hastily formed?"

As he put this question, the eyes of the man scanned the face of the beautiful woman with a cunning leer about them, and his thick lips closed together in a spasmodic manner.

Gertrude felt toward the stranger an intense aversion, and she answered somewhat coldly.

"Possibly," she said. "But you have not yet told me the object of your visit, monsieur."

"Oh, pardon me. Simply to explain to you that the captain may probably be detained a short time, and to appease any alarm you might feel at his absence."

"Many thanks for your kindness," said Gertrude.

She held out her right hand while her left mechanically strayed towards a spring bell on the table, with which she was accustomed to summon her attendant.

Lenco took the small white hand, and compressed it in his large, soft, spongy palm; he also bowed as only Frenchmen bow, but he did not go.

"You will pardon me," he said, working his large mouth as he spoke, "it is a delicate point to mention; but as I am returning to the ambassador's, where I left Captain Disney, is there anything I can have the pleasure of conveying to him?"

Gertrude looked up astonished.

"Nothing, thank you!" she replied.

"No letter?"

"None!"

"No—telegraphic—message?"

Under the reptile eyes of the man who slowly pronounced these words the fair girl blushed crimson. He saw it—gloated over it for a second or two. Then turning away, with a sardonic laugh and much smacking of the lips, he said:

"Forgive me! It was unpardonable! But I happened to meet the messenger of the telegraph office, and on asking him if he had anything for me, his reply was that he had only brought one message to the hotel to-night—one for Captain Disney."

"Yes," faltered the trembling woman.

"And I thought," the other continued, "that as the use of the telegraph implies despatch, it might be serving the captain, or yourself, if I—I—you understand?"

"Perfectly," said Gertrude, recovering a little of her

self-possession. "But you will pardon my reminding you, monsieur, that you are a stranger to me, and that—"

"That we don't trust secrets to strangers? Just so! Very good!" said the horrible man, rolling his lidless, yellow eyes about, and evidently trying to discover what had been done with the missive.

In doing this, he suddenly detected the torn envelope, which had contained it, lying on the carpet.

"You have expressed my meaning exactly," said Gertrude, following his eyes, and crimsoning with confusion, as she also perceived the envelope on the ground. "It is not usual to do so."

"And in this instance it is quite unnecessary," said Lenco, with provoking coolness, "as it was to you that the message was addressed."

"To me? No!" she faltered.

"Pardon me! I only guessed so, seeing that you have opened the envelope."

"It was a matter of no consequence," said Gertrude, trying to assume an indifferent air, yet ready to faint with embarrassment.

"Then I need not mention it to the captain?" said the flabby lips.

"Oh! no—by no means!" exclaimed Gertrude, hastily.

"Your wishes are commands!" returned Lenco, accompanying the words with as near an approach to a wink as is possible to a man with an eye without lids.

Gertrude trembled with a fear and loathing of this man, whom it seemed impossible to shake off.

"I have no particular wish in the matter," she said, quietly.

"Oh! then I may as well mention it if I should see the captain? It may affect his movements."

"I must entreat that you will do nothing of the sort, monsieur!" returned Gertrude. "It's of no consequence, and I should be sorry that he should be annoyed with anything so trivial."

"You will not tell him yourself, then?"

"I may not."

"It is doubtless the privilege of English ladies to open letters addressed to their husbands?"

"In some cases."

"And to keep the contents secret from them?"

"I did not say that I—"

"Oh, no, no!—of course not—of course not!" interrupted the insidious Lenco. "And even if you had said that you had your secrets, and acted on your discretion, you would not have shocked me. I am a Frenchman, and it is precisely what French wives do, I assure you."

He smacked his lips, grinned, and bowed. And so there might have been an end of the interview; but there was an evil look about this man's eyes, and so much of mischief in the play of his lips, that Gertrude trembled at the idea of what might happen should he depart with a spiteful feeling in his heart against her.

Hesitating a little, therefore, she said: "You will not, I am sure, monsieur, put a false construction on, or even mention what has accidentally come to your knowledge? The message really concerns me more than the captain; and as he has much upon his mind at this moment —"

"Indeed!"

"I mean, as he has to attend to all our travelling arrangements, you know, I thought to spare him the annoyance of a purely domestic matter, which—which really affects my happiness only."

The tone in which the latter part of this sentence was spoken was not lost upon the crafty Lenco.

He felt certain that there was something in all this.

He scented a secret, and decided in his own mind that it was one of some importance.

Acting on this impression he advanced his yellow face unpleasantly close to the trembling woman, and whispered:

"Pray assure yourself of my discretion. France is the nation of gallantry, you know. The men make it their study: the ladies claim it as their privilege. It is rather different with your colder countrymen, and it's perfectly natural that you should fear a discovery of any little 'affair' in which you may have committed yourself."

Gertrude started back.

"Committed myself!" she repeated, incredulously.

"Oh, I didn't use the term offensively; indeed, I did not. Pardon me if I came to the conclusion that this was some little affair of gallantry in which you were involved. It was so natural, you know, that, being a Frenchman, I should jump to that conclusion."

"You are altogether wrong, monsieur," said Gertrude, hotly. "It is not I—that is, it is not on my part that there is any real ground for concealment."

"Oh, I see, I see," replied the other as fast as his thick lips could form the sentences, "it is he who has given you cause for jealousy, and you hide this message by way of checkmating him. Very clever! And I daresay very necessary. You are young married people, I think?"

"Yes."

"Married in England?"

"No; in France."

"Indeed!"

Every time M. Lenco used that word he threw an expression into it at which Gertrude shuddered. So, scarcely knowing what she said, she added:

"At Rouen."

"By a Catholic priest or Protestant clergyman?" asked the man, with what was meant for a winning smile.

"I believe by a priest; but why—"

"Excuse me. Is Disney a Catholic?"

"Yes; I believe so."

"And you?"

"A Protestant."

M. Lenco threw up his hands, and lifted his low forehead, bare of eyebrows, till it was full of wrinkles, thereby expressing intense astonishment and concern.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, "this conversation has already gone beyond what is usual among strangers; but I must be permitted, if only from a sense of duty, to make one remark, which I must entreat you to regard as made in confidence, and, as we should say, under the seal of the confessional. You have imparted to me two facts, which strike me as singular, not to say suspicious. And though I have no right to throw a cloud over your young married life, I must say that if you have cause for jealousy you have, indeed, grounds for the most serious alarm."

Gertrude listened to this speech aguish.

"You terrify me," she said.

"Not intentionally. Certainly not with any desire to give you pain," said the thick lips, "but solely with a wish to give you a hint, a suggestion, a fatherly caution, if I might make so bold, on which you should frame your conduct. I cannot expect you to repose in me any of your confidences. I am a stranger and do not forget it; but even a stranger, with a heart in his breast, would not wish to see one so young, so fair, so inexperienced, made the victim of accomplished villainy."

"Villany! Oh, pray tell me what it is that you suspect?"

"The matter is so delicate," whispered Lenco, "that I hardly dare trust myself to speak of it; if I did, I would prefer putting what I have to say in the form of a question, which I may shape in this way: Supposing a marriage to have been celebrated, under conditions which render it illegal, in fact no marriage at all, and the deluded lady found her betrayer in

correspondence with another lady, would not her position justify all I have said?"

Gertrude hardly heard the words, yet seemed to gather the terrible sense of them. There was a singing in her ears, the floor seemed to sink away from her feet, and as she fixed her eyes with an irresistible steadfastness on the hideous face of M. Lenco, it seemed to expand, growing hideous and distorted as it did so, until it filled all the room.

The horror of the moment did not clothe itself in words.

Steadfast eyes, spasmodically twitching lips, and a rigid form, alone indicated to M. Lenco the effect of his words.

And this appeared to be satisfactory rather than otherwise, for Gertrude in her strange state knew that a grin played about the great lips, which seemed to stretch from one side of the room to the other as they opened with cavernous width and gave utterance to some further words.

"You are naturally shocked, madam," she heard him say, "and I will not trespass further upon you. But we shall meet again, and when we do, remember that I shall not abuse your confidence, but hope to prove myself your sincere friend. Rely upon me, if you will, to investigate this matter for you and to see you righted. Above all, do not leave Paris till you know more. And remember, secrecy, strict, inviolable secrecy."

Gertrude had a sense of the hideous face dying out of the room with a malicious grin upon it, of a faint sound of chuckling and of mumbling lips, and then a roaring torrent seemed to rush over her brain, and to sweep from it memory and consciousness.

CHAPTER XLIII.

GERTRUDE'S DARK RESOLVE.

Oh, let me steal my heart and bend my will
To this the deadly purpose of my life.

Li Collet.

It was impossible for Captain Disney, as Roland Hershaw now called himself, to leave Paris as speedily as he intended.

The loss of his passport was a fatal obstacle.

How he had lost it he could not imagine; but he had missed it soon after quitting the cab in which M. Lenco had so obligingly given him a lift to the street in the Champs Elysées in which his hotel was situated, and it was incumbent on him to set to work at once to make the loss good.

Without his passport he could not stir, it was dangerous even to remain where he was.

In the present day an Englishman does not require a passport while he remains in France; but he cannot cross the frontiers without one. Such was not the case a few years ago. Then he was bound to have it, and to be ready to produce it at any moment. To attempt to quit the city without it would have been simply impossible.

On returning to the hotel at a late hour, the captain heard without much concern that madame was indisposed, and had retired to rest.

"Was anything particular the matter?" he asked.

"No," was the assurance of the servant in attendance, who had a curious, hesitating manner with him as he spoke.

"No visitors have called?"

"None."

Roland would have sworn that the fellow was lying, from his manner; but on reflection it seemed impossible. Who could have called? And if any one had done so, why should he wish his visit to be kept a secret?

The idea, thus hastily entertained, was soon forgotten. Roland Hershaw had no time to distress and torture himself with ideal troubles or fancied dangers. His position was too critical to admit of that, and it required the utmost energy and strain of mind for him to take the necessary measures to secure his own safety, and to realize as best he might the ambitious project for which he had risked so much, and sunk his soul in such an abyss of guilt.

That confused, self-accusing manner of the servant did not occur to him again till next morning, when he saw Gertrude as she came from her dressing-room, elegantly attired, but pale and wasted in face, and with large dark hollows under her gleaming eyes.

"Are your jewels packed, Gertrude?" he asked abruptly.

"N—no," she faltered.

"Why not?"

"I was fatigued after the ball, and did not feel equal to the task."

"You were not otherwise engaged?"

"Engaged!"

"You had no visitors?"

"Who should visit me here?"

The question in answer to his own was asked so naturally and innocently, that Roland abandoned his

suspicious at once. He must have been deceived, he felt; the servant could not have been guilty and confused.

"I didn't know," he remarked with some awkwardness; "these French people are renowned for their gallantry as they call it—a pretty name for insulting other people's wives by absurd and uncalled-for attentions. And you might—well, well; enough of that. You must really have your things in readiness. We may leave Paris at a moment's notice. Half-an-hour may be fatal to us."

She did not now ask him why there was this haste, or seek in any way to fathom his motives or learn his plans. Since they had parted over-night a remarkable change had come over Gertrude Norman. It did not display itself in her words, her looks, her manner, but in something above and beyond all these.

The man who called her his wife was conscious of it, he could hardly tell how or in what way.

If he had tried to convey his impression, it would have been that she had lost the look and bearing of the girl and assumed those of the woman, suddenly and prematurely.

And some such change had really come over her. Great mental struggles, and severe heart-trials are not to be passed through without startling results. It is an historical fact that the hair of Marie Antoinette turned grey in a single night of extreme terror. The experience is not a solitary one. The mind acts on the body with absolute sway, and a crisis in the affections not unfrequently results in death.

It was not surprising that Gertrude should look changed in the few hours that had elapsed. She was changed, and the look only indicated what had taken place.

Twelve hours before, her position had been this: She had loved to adoration a man who did not return her passion to the extent that her heart craved, but who had given her substantial proof of his sincerity by making her his wife. While she felt that she was not loved as she had once fondly hoped she might have been, there was the feeling in her heart that love might beget love, and that she might find Roland all she had expected.

It was a fatal delusion—love is not a plant to be affected by any forcing process; but she was the victim of it.

So, when her suspicions were aroused that he had married her for her money only, she consoled herself with the thought that when he had it, and found that she was thus the source of affluence to him, he would love her, if only out of gratitude.

With this idea, too, she had even tolerated the discovery that Roland was still infatuated with her old rival, Amy Robart. She had hardly upbraided him for his perfidy. The leading idea of her mind had been that it was the result of causes natural enough, and capable of removal.

"If she were dead," she had argued with herself, "perhaps then—then he would love me?"

What had passed last night in that singular interview with the hideous Lenco had changed the entire current of these feelings.

She had awakened to the knowledge that Roland Hershaw had done her the foulest wrong which a man can do a woman. He had beguiled her from her friends, abused her confiding love and confidence, and under the pretence of making her his wife, had made her—what?

Imagine the shudder of horror with which she first put that question to her own mind.

No wonder that the inevitable answer caused an utter revulsion of feeling, and changed the whole current of her being. Indifference, hard as it was to bear—the preference of another, a yet harder trial—her strong love rendered her equal to; but what woman could endure this last and greatest wrong?

As the thought came upon her that she was not Roland Hershaw's wife—that she was not even his mistress, since he hardly pretended to love her—but was merely his dupe—all the sea of love she had lavished on him seemed to ebb away from her heart, and to leave it cold, and rocky, and barren as a dry ocean-bed.

Roland was out the greater part of the next day, and the miserable woman who bore his name, but who had no claim to it, sat in the tawdry mirror-lined drawing-room, nursing her own dark thoughts.

What would she not have given to have retraced the one false step which had led to all this? What price would she not have paid to have been once more back under Mrs. Larkall's maternal care, and among her happy school companions?

Alas! the past could return no more.

The mistake of a life could never be atoned for.

To look back, therefore, was misery; and how when she confronted the future? What aspect did it wear to her? With what emotions did it inspire her?

Gertrude Norman was not, in the strongest sense, a "good" girl. Her training had not been such as to strengthen the better qualities that were in her. The

fashionable boarding-school is proverbially delicate ground for the young and friendless, and Mrs. Larkall's establishment was no exception to the rule. It was neither better nor worse than many of its class, and it turned out, as they all do, a great many clever, showy, lady-like girls; but comparatively few whose pure minds and sound principles fitted them for stern conflict in the battle of life.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when this young girl contemplated the future to which her own indiscretion had doomed her, she did not take the "good" view of the matter.

Any suggestion involving the idea of meek submission, of repentance, or of forgiveness of the wrong done her, she would have scouted with indignation.

All her thoughts, as she sat brooding and brooding in the mirrored drawing-room, took a darker hue and converged to one very different point. She was feverishly eager to redeem her position; failing that, she resolved, at all hazards, to conceal the full extent of its ghastly reality, but above all, beyond all, and blending with all, there grew and strengthened in her mind one dark and paramount idea.

Whatever might happen, one thing she resolved within herself was inevitable.

"I loved him as I never believed woman could love man," she said. "I will hate him as I have never loved him. And so surely as I live I WILL RE-VENGE!"

This was the one direction in which her feelings bore her as strongly as the gathering clouds are swept before the wind.

When Roland returned late in the evening he was perturbed and agitated. He had, however, succeeded in getting his passport renewed, and declared that it was indispensable for him to quit that city at once.

"It is strange," he said, "that I have received no communication from London."

"You expected one?" asked Gertrude, coldly.

"Yes."

"On business?"

"Of course," he returned, sharply; "what else should it be about?"

"I am not in your confidence," replied Gertrude.

"Oh, you will know enough—too much, 'p'raps—of me and my affairs, some day." He said this bitterly, and turned away.

Gertrude shuddered.

What she knew of her equivocal position gave a dark and terrible meaning to words which a few hours ago she would have regarded with indifference.

A strong temptation was upon her to deliver up the telegraphic message she still carried in her bosom, and to charge Roland with his perfidy; but it was better to wait. Better to appear to know nothing and to assume an air of submission, until she could mature her plans and determine what should be the character of that vengeance which could alone satisfy her outraged heart.

Roland also had a part to play, which made him desire to conciliate rather than offend Gertrude, and though the last remark had apparently been forced from his lips, he regretted it, and soon sought to smooth away the impression he had made.

"You must excuse me, Gertrude," he said, "if I'm a little rough and irritable to-night. I have my trials; let that satisfy you. I have my reasons, too, and they are sound ones, for wishing to get away to-night. But you need not go."

"I not go?"

"It is not absolutely necessary that you should," Roland answered, eagerly; "and it would square better with my plans if you would arrange to follow me in a day or two."

"Roland!" cried the outraged wife, indignantly.

"What now?" demanded the other. "Is it asking so very much? We have been separated since our—"

Gertrude did not permit him to mock her by misnaming the ceremony to which he referred.

"What purpose have you in this?" she interposed.

"I cannot tell you."

"You dare not?"

"How?"

Gertrude saw Roland's cheek flame and his eyes glow with sudden fire; she did not fear him, but prudence made her hesitate.

"Have I not reason to believe," she asked, "that you fear to confide in me the secret of your strange proceedings? If you dared to do so with safety, why should you take such pains to keep me in the dark?"

"You mistake your position, Gertrude," he replied. "Indeed!"

"Yes. You think that because I made you my wife I have raised you to an equality with myself. That is a mistake. Many men do this. They make their wives participators in all things, confide to them their secrets, open to them their prospects, and seek and act upon their advice. Such men are fools.

They mistake the very nature of marriage. Their conduct is like that of a monarch who should preach the doctrines of 'equality.' It would lose him his own position, and not benefit those in whose favour it is made."

It was seldom that Hershaw condescended to speak at such length.

Gertrude knew this, and listened to him with dismay, for she felt that he must have some deep purpose in uttering these sentiments.

"In your view of the matter, the husband should be the tyrant and the wife the slave—is that so?" she asked bitterly.

"Precisely."

"I thank you for your exposition of your philosophy of marriage," Gertrude could not help retorting, "but it would have been more valuable if it had been given before—before—" She hesitated, then added, abruptly, "But all this is useless. You ask me to remain here, in this strange place, while you depart suddenly for I know not where. You refuse to tell me your purpose in this, yet you expect me to obey you?"

"You will obey me!" cried Roland contemptuously, and turning from her, directed his attention to a mass of papers which lay on a table in one corner of the drawing-room.

Gertrude bit her lips, and her bosom heaved convulsively as she paced backwards and forwards, chafing under this command laid upon her without even the show of respect.

As she thus vented her indignation, the mirrors lining the room in place of the ordinary paper of such apartments reflected her tall figure and her beautiful but angry face, and involuntarily she raised her head and glanced at the image of herself.

In doing so, she could not repress a start at perceiving that one of the mirror-panels opened like a door, that it stood some inches ajar, and that from behind it there gleamed upon her the eyes of a man!

They had been watched, then, that was certain.

Their conversation had been overheard, and the degradation she had just suffered had been witnessed by this concealed spy.

Fiercely indignant at the thought, Gertrude took a step forward, intending to expose the intruder, when the glass panel was thrust still further open, and she recognized a hideous but familiar face.

It was that of Lenco, the man who had so strangely intruded himself on her company the night previous.

His bald, yellow, oily head, with its shelving brow, lidless eyes, fleshy nose and horrible mouth, appeared for a second, then retreated into the shade. As it did so, a long, thin, knotted finger was held up in a significant manner, which Gertrude understood.

It meant caution.

While she yet looked in speechless amazement, the panel closed; but she knew that Lenco had heard, and doubted not that he would yet hear all that passed in that room.

Unconscious of what was passing, Roland had hastily tied up and disposed, according to a fashion of his own, the papers he was engaged on. During the few minutes thus occupied, he could hear Gertrude's restless feet, and knew that she was outraged and angry. This in itself would have given him little pain, but the thought occurred to him that even yet he was not quite independent—he had not yet fingered the whole of the fortune, and should Gertrude's indignation carry her beyond a certain point, it might be a serious obstacle in the way of his purposes.

Thus impressed he suddenly rose, and, with that fascinating manner that he could so easily assume, and which he believed to be invincible with the other sex, he advanced and held out his hand.

"Forgive me, Gertrude," he said. "I was cruel."

The time had been, and that but a few hours ago, when Gertrude's heart would have melted under that smile as an icicle melts in the winter sunshine; but not now. She knew how false it was, and his words woke no response in her heart. Still, she could dissimulate as he did, and, forcing a half-smile, she suffered herself to take his hand.

"You confess it?" she asked.

"Freely."

"Your slave is grateful," rejoined the woman, with mock humility.

"Nonsense, Gertrude. Come now; we must not misunderstand each other, and in proof of my good faith and confidence, I will give you my reasons for wishing you to remain here a day or two after my departure."

Gertrude instinctively glanced at the glass panel.

It was partly open.

"It would be too long a story to confess to you why it is necessary for me to quit Paris at once and without delay," Roland went on. "Besides, it might give you pain in the telling. Enough that I am desirous of going and leaving the impression behind that we are still resident here. My wife remaining—"

Gertrude shuddered at that word "wife."

"I say my wife remaining will be taken as evidence that I intend to return. The ruse is perfectly innocent. It will hurt no one. Nor will it expose you to any danger or inconvenience. I have already completed my arrangements for starting. I shall go out as if for a stroll, and shall not return. You will receive a note by post, stating that I am gone to Versailles to spend a day or two with a friend. On the second day you will leave, according to the instructions contained in these papers which I place in your hands. You will first take train to the place mentioned, then post across the country to Berlin. There you will find me awaiting you."

"You will be there?" she asked, significantly.

"There! Of course. Do you think I want to desert you?"

"Oh, no! The idea!"

"You will follow these instructions, then?"

Gertrude glanced at the open panel.

M. Lenco nodded his bald, yellow head.

"I will," she replied.

"And now, one word more. My object is secrecy. Everything in our future depends upon it. Therefore, not a word of these arrangements to a living soul: no chance hint to the servants, you understand."

"Thoroughly."

"Right, right, my darling. And now, good-bye!"

He put one hand on either side the beautiful face, and so raised it toward his own. The action had little of feeling, nothing of passion in it, but was purely mechanical.

The woman felt this, and drew back with a shudder of repulsiveness.

As Roland was about to impress a kiss upon the tempting lips, a sharp, snap-like sound broke the silence.

Both started, and looked eagerly round.

And Gertrude saw that the glass panel was closed.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BODY IN THE RIVER.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since: with many an arrow deep intr'd
My panting side was charged. Couper.

As he had proposed, Roland Hershaw strolled quietly out of his hotel, as if simply intending to take a walk.

He had on a light loose coat, which he had bought on the previous day, and which hung freely about him, displaying a jacket buttoned across the chest, so as to reveal a white waistcoat, on which glistened a heavy watch-guard. His neck-tie was bright blue, set off with a diamond pin of pure water, representing a hundred guineas in value. A similar stone glistened in a ring on his finger, but was now hidden beneath a delicate-tinted, exquisitely-fitting glove. In his hand he carried a gold-mounted cane, and when we have added that his hat was new, and of the most expensive Paris make, and that his Paris boots outvalued it in gloss, it will be seen that he presented the outward appearance of a perfect gentleman.

So the Count de Bayer evidently thought as they met in one of the side-walks of the Champs Elysées. The count was, if anything, more stiff and formal—more as if he had the suit of armour on under his tightly buttoned-up surcoat, than he had been at the ball; but he eyed Roland with great suavity, and held out his hand in the most cordial manner.

That Roland was anything but pleased to see him may be imagined.

Of all men, the count was the last whom he would have cared to meet at that moment. What he had witnessed at the ball, and what Gertrude had imparted to him, had fairly roused his suspicions of the handsome foreigner.

The Secret Society, of whose vengeance he lived in perpetual dread, had its agents in every rank, and often those least suspected were the most to be dreaded. And Roland, who had begun to reap the natural consequences of his acts, and to see danger in every shadow, had from the first regarded this man with terror.

"Do you make a long stay in Paris, may I ask?" said the count, blandly.

"I am uncertain," replied the annoyed Roland—"it, in fact, depends on madame's wishes."

"Ah! the charming lady I had the pleasure of dancing with at the ball. Do you know that nothing would persuade me but that she was your sister?"

"She is my wife!" replied Roland.

"Indeed!"

That "indeed!" was, the young man thought, very unnecessary.

People had married young and pretty women before, and had taken them to Paris on wedding-tours; it was surely not so very astounding that he should do the same? So he felt, and the simple exclamation only intensified his fears of this man. The members of secret societies, such as that under the terror of

which he lived, were sworn to communicate from one to the other the minutest trifles in respect to the victims under sentence, as well as to render aid in time, money, and, if necessary, crime, in order to effect the end in view.

Was it not a confirmation of his fears as to De Beyer, that he had obviously heard something of that marriage ceremony between himself and Gertrude?

These thoughts were in Roland's mind as they stood together conversing on the topics of the day—barring politics, which are not to be discussed at street corners in Paris—and as they afterwards walked side by side, much to Roland's exasperation, for the count would not be shaken off.

It was half an hour before he got rid of him, and the time for the departure of his train was drawing so nigh that he was in terror lest he should be obliged to lose it, and had some thoughts of the possibility of making a sudden bolt out of the count's presence, when the latter abruptly raised his hat, and departed.

Roland saw him turn down another path; then hailed a cab and gave the driver instructions to drive at his utmost speed—which is not very alarming in a Paris cab-horse at the best—to the railway terminus.

Strangely enough, just as he was about to step into the vehicle, he looked through the opposite window, and saw M. Lence over the way, looking hard at the cab.

"Does the old fool expect me to return him the favour of last night?" he asked himself; "if he does, he will be grievously disappointed."

With this he took his seat, and was driven off.

He was seen in the cab by one of the servants at the hotel, and thus news of him reached Gertrude through her French maid. It gave her no pleasure to receive it as she sat amidst the tawdry splendour of her temporary home; but it confirmed what Roland had mentioned as his plan, and she was so far content.

How cold and stark the old love for him lay in her heart now, words cannot describe.

As difficult is it to convey an idea of the new feelings which had sprung up in its place—feelings so dark and terrible that she feared to look into her heart, as she would have feared to go by night into a vault.

"Why should she have been treated thus?" she asked herself. She had done him no wrong, unless loving him too well, with a feeling too like idolatry, was a wrong. It was her own maiden propriety and innocence that she had outraged. But it was for his sake, and at his solicitation, and surely his was not the hand to visit the consequences upon her head? How terribly wicked and depraved he must be, she saw more and more strongly, as she thought of all his words, his protestations, his past acts, and placed them out as parts of that one great design to rob her of her fortune, and then to throw her aside with the brand of infamy upon her—such a brand as nothing could thereafter efface.

During the two days during which she was to wait for him, the girl had many opportunities for indulging these torturing thoughts.

On the second day, she anxiously awaited a communication from Roland, on which she had promised him to act. She meant to keep that promise. She was determined to be with him—to watch him constantly, and to act as circumstances might dictate.

At this time, there was no definite plan of operation in her mind.

That she would visit upon his own head the consequences of his brutality in some signal act of vengeance, became the master-thought of her life; but how this end would work itself out, was left as a matter of accident.

That second day was one of painful watching and anxiety.

Her instructions were that she was, that night, to proceed in accordance with the papers entrusted to her; but was also to be guided by such directions as she might receive.

Those instructions did not arrive.

The next day also passed, and nothing was heard of Roland.

Gertrude began to be alarmed. She had up to that time believed that he had really a secret reason for going alone and leaving her to follow, as he had planned.

Now, she feared that what he had proposed was only part of his general scheme of villany, and that he had not hesitated to leave her alone and without resources in that hated city.

As time passed, and no tidings came to her, she was more and more convinced of this treachery, and she cursed her own folly in suffering him thus to escape out of her hands.

She resolved, at length, that she would wait two days longer, and then place herself in communication with Mrs. Larkall, and ask her forgiveness and advice.

Long after dusk on the evening of the first day, she sat at the window, looking out into a melancholy garden, in which nothing seemed to flourish but two mildewed cupids, and, over it, into another portion of the hotel with ground glass windows.

A melancholy place enough it was, but it exactly accorded with the tenor of her own thoughts. So she sat brooding over her wrongs and her chaotic ideas of vengeance, until her attention was arrested by one of the ground-glass windows opposite being suddenly thrown up.

Some one looked out.

It was M. Lence, and as Gertrude saw this their eyes met.

Two minutes after, the window had been shut down and the unpleasant Frenchman was in Gertrude's room.

"Pardon me," he began—it was his customary method of opening a conversation, as if he regarded that as an impertinence under any circumstances—"but I am glad you happen to be at home, madam, very glad—and yet, if I may say it, very sorry likewise."

"What has happened, monsieur?" said Gertrude, in alarm.

"Well, well, we won't say that anything *has* happened," the man smirked out with his thick lips, "but something may have happened which may or may not be important to you."

"Pray explain yourself," cried Gertrude.

"I will," said the other, twisting his mobile face about, "but I must beg of you on no account to be alarmed at what I am about to tell you. You have heard of the Morgue?"

"Surely, yes."

"It is the place, you know, to which the bodies of the dead found in the Seine are conveyed."

"I have heard of it."

"Oh, it's one of the great institutions of Paris. The bodies are laid out on slabs, and over each slab is suspended the clothes which covered it when it was found, so that relatives and friends may have an opportunity of recognizing one or the other, or both."

"Well, well," said Gertrude; "and what of this?"

"Why," replied Lence, "a body has been found."

"Ah!"

"The body of a man."

"In the river?"

"Yes—'tis at the Morgue."

"And it is *he*—you have identified it?" exclaimed Gertrude.

"No, I am not sure of that."

"But you have seen him. You would know his face in a moment."

"Yes," replied Lence; "but the body has been in the water two or three days, and water is not a great beautifier in itself, added to which, death was evidently caused by violence, and that again is apt to destroy likeness."

"You reason that this man, whoever he is, has been murdered?"

"Likely, I think. Or he may have blown his own brains out. But what we want to do is to establish the identity. See, I have here a list of the clothes found on the deceased. I will read it. 'Light overcoat—'

"He wore such a coat."

"'Dark jacket, buttoned across chest.'"

"Yes."

"'White waistcoat.'"

"He always wore one."

"I thought so. 'Blue scarf.'"

"Yes."

"'Diamond pin in it.'"

"That remained, did it?"

"Yes. 'Diamond ring on finger, fawn-coloured gloves, hat by Armand, boots elastic, gold-headed cane found floating in the water near; what do you say?'"

"'Tis he!" cried Gertrude, standing aghast at the thought of the vengeance of heaven which seemed to have anticipated so speedily any poor revenge which she might have painfully worked out.

"I think," said M. Lence, "that it is very desirable that we should be satisfied. Desirable for you, because if he is dead with him may die the secret of your shame."

Gertrude uttered a sharp cry of agony.

"Desirable for me," Lence went on without appearing to notice the effect his words produced; "because—well, I won't trouble you at this painful moment with my uninteresting personal affairs."

Gertrude scarcely heeded him.

Her brain was rapidly recollecting the events of the past, and trying to pierce the gloom of the future.

Moreover, in that moment, some slight touch of compassion mingled with and tempered the fierce emotions of her soul. She forgot that she hated, she remembered only how she had loved, and she pitied this poor, lost wretch.

"Roland dead!" she cried out, after a momentary struggle. "It is incredible!"

"'Praps," muttered the thick lips; "but suppose we go down to the Morgue?"

And they set off together to that dreary resting-place of the unclaimed dead.

(To be continued.)

SELF-MADE;

OR,

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c. &c.

CHAPTER CXIII.

They that on glorious ancestors enlarge
Produce their debt instead of their discharge.

Young.

THE viscount had ordered his carriage to be in readiness to convey him to the magistrate's office. Old Cuthbert was punctual. And accordingly on the morning in question Lord Vincent, and Faustina, attended by Mrs. MacDonald and the policeman who had them in custody, entered the carriage and were driven to the town hall.

Here again, as on a former occasion, the viscount, in alighting, ordered the coachman to keep the carriage waiting for him.

Then he and his party passed through the same halls and ante-chambers, guarded by policemen, and entered the magistrate's office.

Sir Alexander McKetchum was already in his seat on the little raised platform.

His clerk sat at a table below him.

On his right hand stood several officers of the law.

On his left hand stood Judge Merlin, Ishmael Worth, and the witnesses that had been summoned for the prosecution.

The policeman McKee led his charge up in front of the magistrate, and taking off his hat, said:

"Here are the prisoners, your worship."

Lord Vincent, as if for the purpose of proving himself a gentleman, at least in external manners, even under the most trying circumstances, advanced and bowed to the magistrate.

Sir Alexander acknowledged his salute by a nod, and then said:

"No, then, as ye are here, me laird, we may as well proceed wi' the investigation."

"I beg your pardon, sir; I am expecting my counsel," said the viscount.

"Aweel! I suppose we maun wait a bit," said the magistrate.

But at this moment the counsel for the prisoner hurried into the office.

"We have waited for you, Mr. Bruce," said the viscount, reproachfully.

"I am very sorry that you should have been obliged to do so, my lord! But the truth is, I have been to the telegraph office, to send a message of inquiry at the last moment to your lordship's London bankers to ask if the Earl of Hurst-Monceaux had yet been heard from. I waited for the answer, which has but just arrived, and which has proved unsatisfactory."

"The earl has not written to his London bankers, then?"

"No, my lord."

"Are you ready for the examination?"

"Quite, my lord."

"Aweel, then, I suppose we may proceed?" said Sir Alexander.

"At your worship's convenience," replied Mr. Bruce with a bow.

And thereupon the proceedings commenced.

The magistrate took up the warrant that had been issued for his arrest of the prisoners and read it to them aloud. Then addressing them both, he said:

"Malcolm, Laird Vincent, and you, Faustina Dugald, are herein charged wi' having feloniously conspired against the good character o' Claudia Viscountess Vincent, and to farther said conspiracy, wi' having abducted the bodies of the three named herein—Catherine Mortimer, James Mortimer and Sarah Sims; against the peace and dignity o' the Queen's Majesty, and punishable according to the statute in such cases made and provided. What hae ye to say for yoursel's in answer to this charge?"

"I deny it in toto! And I think it infamous that I should be called to answer such an insulting charge," said the viscount, with a fine assumption of virtuous indignation.

"And sae do I think it infamous; I agree wi' ye there, laird! But as to wilful party the infamy attaches to, there we may differ," said the magistrate, nodding.

The viscount drew himself up in haughty silence, as though he disdained further reply.

"And noo, Faustina Dugald, what hae ye to say for yoursel'?"

"I did not conspire! I did not abduct! I did not

do anything wrong! Not I myself!" cried Faustina, vehemently.

"There, there, that will do! We will hear the testimony on this case. Let Ishmael Worth come forward," said the magistrate.

Ishmael advanced, bowed to the magistrate, and stood waiting.

"Ross, administer the oath," said the magistrate.

The clerk took a copy of the Holy Scriptures and held them towards Ishmael, at the same time dictating the oath, according to the custom of such officials.

But Ishmael, at the very onset, courteously interrupted him by saying gently:

"I am conscientiously opposed to taking an oath; but I will make a solemn affirmation of the truth of what I am about to state. I am sorry," added Ishmael, courteously, "to have made this objection about a seemingly small matter; but, in truth, no point of conscience is really a small matter."

"Certainly, no," responded the magistrate.

Ishmael then made his formal affirmation, and gave in his testimony. First of all he identified Catherine Mortimer, James Mortimer, and Sarah Sims, as the servants, first of Judge Randolph Merlin, then of his daughter, Claudia, Lady Vincent. Then he testified to the facts of the finding them in the Island of Cuba; their recovery by Judge Merlin; and their return, in his company, to Scotland.

At the conclusion of this evidence, the counsel for the prisoners made some sarcastic remarks about the reliability of the testimony of a witness who refused to make his statement upon oath; but he was sharply rebuked for his pains by the magistrate.

"Judge Randolph Merlin will please to come forward," was the next order of the clerk.

"I have no conscientious scruples about taking an oath, though I certainly honour the scruples of others. And I am ready to corroborate upon oath the testimony of the last witness," said Judge Merlin, advancing and standing before the magistrate.

The oath was duly administered to him, and he began his statement.

He also identified the three servants as his own domestics, who were transferred to his daughter's service on the occasion of her marriage with Lord Vincent, and who were taken by her to Scotland. He likewise testified to the facts of finding them in the city of Havana, and the transporting them back to Scotland.

The counsel for the accused took various exceptions to the evidence given by this witness; but his exceptions were set aside by the magistrate as vexatious and impertinent.

Then he cross-examined the witness, as severely as if the case, instead of being in a magistrate's office, were before the Lord Commissioners of the Assizes. But this cross-examination only had the effect of emphasizing the testimony of the witness, and impressing the facts more firmly upon the mind of the magistrate.

And then, as the counsel could make nothing by perseverance in this course, he permitted the witness to sit down.

"Catherine Mortimer will come forward!" said the clerk.

"That's me! I've got leave to speak at last!" said old Kate, with a malignant nod at the accused.

And she stepped up, folded her arms upon her bosom, threw back her head, and stood with an air of conscious importance most wonderful to behold.

"Your name is Catherine Mortimer?" said the clerk.

"Yes, young sir—yes—that is my name—Catherine Mortimer. Which Catherine was the name given me in baptism, and Mortimer were the name conferred upon me in holy matrimony by my late husband, which he was coachman to old Colonel Burghes, as fought in the war—"

"What the de'il is the woman talking about?" here put in the magistrate.

"She is giving testimony in this case," sarcastically answered the counsel for the accused.

"My good woman, we don't want to hear any of your private history. Your name, you say, is Catherine Mortimer—"

"Sure it is; Catherine Mortimer, a respectable widder woman, 'cause Mortimer, poor man, died of consumption—"

"Catherine Mortimer, do you understand the nature of an oath?" interrupted the clerk.

"What should prevent me? Where you think I have been living all my days?" replied Katy, indignantly.

"I ask you—do you understand the nature of an oath? and I require you to give a straightforward answer," said the clerk.

"Yes, I does understand the nature of an oath. I knows how, if anybody takes a false one, which it won't be Catherine Mortimer, they'll go right straight down to the bottomless pit, and serve 'em right!"

"Very well, then," said the clerk. And he put a

small Bible into her hand, and dictated the usual oath, which she repeated with an awful solemnity of manner, that must have carried conviction of her perfect orthodoxy to the minds of the most sceptical cavaliers.

"Your name, you say, is Catherine Mortimer?" said the clerk, as if requiring her to repeat this fact also under oath.

The repetition of the question nettled Katy.

"My good gracious alive," she said, "I ain't been tellin' of you no lies, and now I tell you again my name is Catherine Mortimer."

"Now, then, tell us what you know of this case," said the clerk.

But this order was more easily made than obeyed. It was very difficult for Katy to confine herself to the statement of facts, for the reason that she seemed to imagine herself prosecutor, witness, jury and executioner all rolled into one.

It took all the tact of the clerk to get from her what could be received as pure legal evidence.

Katy's testimony would be nothing new to the reader. Her statement under oath to the magistrate was the same in effect that she had made to Judge Merlin. And although it was rather a rambling narrative, mixed up with a good deal of bitter invective against the accused, and gratuitous advice to the bench, and acute suggestions of the manner of retribution that ought to be measured out to the culprits, yet still the shrewd magistrate managed to get from it a tolerably clear idea of the nature of the conspiracy formed against the honour of Lady Vincent and the motive for the abduction of the servants. And although the counsel for the accused laboured hard to get this evidence set aside, it was accepted as good.

"James Mortimer," called the clerk.

And Jim walked forward and stood respectfully waiting to be examined.

The clerk, after putting the same questions to Jim that he had put to Jim's mother, and receiving the most satisfactory answers, administered the usual oath, and proceeded with the examination.

Jim said that he was the son of the last witness, and he corroborated the statements made by her, as far as his own personal experience corresponded with hers. And although he was severely cross-examined, he never varied from his first story, and his testimony was held good.

"Sarah Sims" was the next called.

And Sally advanced modestly and stood respectfully before the magistrate.

Having satisfactorily answered the preliminary questions that were put to her, she took the prescribed oath with a deep reverence of manner that preposessed every one, except the accused and their counsel, in her favour.

And then she gave her testimony in a clear, simple, concise manner, that met the approval of all who heard her.

The counsel for the accused cross-examined her with ingenuity, but without success.

Sally's testimony was decidedly the most conclusive of all. And she was allowed to sit down.

Then the counsel for the accused arose and made a speech, in which he ingeniously sought to do away with the effect of the evidence which had been given against the prisoners. It would be monstrous, he said, to send a nobleman and a lady to trial upon such evidence as had been given in by such witnesses as had appeared there. And he ended by demanding that his clients should be instantly and honourably discharged from custody, and particularly that they should not be remanded.

And he sat down.

"Dinna ye fash yersel', laddie! I hae nae the least intention to remand the accused. I shall commit them for trial," said the magistrate. Then looking down upon his clerk, he said: "Ross, mon, mak' out the warrants."

A perfect storm of remonstrances, strange to witness in a magistrate's office, arose.

The lawyer sprang upon his feet and vehemently opposed the committal.

Lord Vincent indignantly exclaimed against the outrage of sending a nobleman of the house of Hurst-Monceaux to trial.

Faustina went into hysterics, and was attended to by Mrs. MacDonald.

Meanwhile the clerk coolly made out the warrants, and placed them in the hands of McRae for execution. That prompt policeman proceeded to take possession of his prisoners.

But the storm increased; Faustina's screams woke the welkin; Lord Vincent's loud denunciations accompanied her in bass keys; the lawyer's wild expostulations and gesticulations arose above all.

Sir Alexander had borne all this tempestuous opposition very patiently at first; but the patience of the most long-suffering man may give out. Sir Alexander's did.

"McRae, remove the prisoners. And laddie," he

said to the denunciatory lawyer, "gin ye dinna haul your tongue, I'll commit yourself for contempt!"

Lord Vincent, seeing that all opposition must be worse than vain, quietly yielded the point, and followed his conductor. But Faustina's animal nature got the ascendancy, and she resisted, fought, and screamed like a wild cat. It took half-a-dozen policemen to put her into the carriage, and then the handcuffs had to be put on.

As soon as quiet was restored, another case was called on. It was that of Frisbie, the ex-valet, charged with the murder of Ailsie Dunbar.

CHAPTER CXIV.

THE FATE OF THE VISCOUNT.

Oh, vanity of youthful blood,
So by misuse to poison good!
Reason awakes, and views unbarred
The sacred gates she wished to guard,
Sees approach the harp law,
And Nemesis beholds with awe,
Ready to seize the poor remains
That vice has left of all his gains.
Cold penitence, lame after-thought,
With fear, despair, and horror fraught,
Call back the guilty pleasures dead,
Whom he has robbed and whom betrayed!

Bishop Hoadley.

WHEN the carriage containing the prisoners reached the goal, they were taken out to be conducted to the warden's office.

The viscount, who was in a mood of suppressed fury, was attended by Policeman McRae and followed by old Cuthbert, broken-hearted by the dishonour of his master.

Faustina, who had raged herself into a state of exhaustion, and consequently of quietude, was attended by Policeman Christie and supported by Mrs. MacDonald, who tenderly soothed and flattered her.

It was a busy day in the warden's office, and the warden had but little time to bestow on these interesting prisoners.

"And see they hae committed ye for trial, me laird, mair's the pity; and the puir lassie, too; me heart is sair for her," said Auld Saundie Grahame, as they were led up to his desk to have their names re-entered upon the prison-books.

"It was a most unwarrantable proceeding! a monstrous abuse of office!" burst forth the viscount, in a fury.

"As to that, me laird, I hae never yet seen the prisoner enter these wa's wi' ony verra great esteem for the authorities that sent him here," drily replied Auld Saundie.

Then turning to an under-warden, he said:

"Ye'll convey the prisoners back to the cells occupied by them before."

And Faustina was carried back to the women's ward, followed by the sympathizing Mrs. MacDonald, who promised to remain with her until the hour of closing.

And the viscount, attended by Cuthbert, was conducted to his corner cell, there to abide until the day of trial.

Old Cuthbert remained with his master until he was summoned to drive Mrs. MacDonald back to the castle.

Several days passed. Every morning Mrs. MacDonald, driven by Cuthbert in the family carriage, came to town, to spend the day in the cell with Faustina, while Cuthbert remained in attendance upon the viscount. And every evening she returned to the castle.

The Earl of Hurst-Monceaux did not come. But news at length came of him. His bankers wrote that he was out on a cruise in his yacht, his exact latitude being unknown.

Lord Vincent, now that he was fully committed for trial, really did not seem to be anxious for his father's return. Perhaps he would rather not have met the earl, under present circumstances. He held daily consultations with his counsel. These were entirely confidential. Being assured by Mr. Bruce that it was essentially necessary the counsel should be in possession of all the facts, the prisoner made a tolerably clean breast of it, at least so far as the abduction of the servants was concerned; he exercised some little reticence in the matters of his relations with Faustina and his conspiracy against Lady Vincent.

Mr. Bruce, of course, put the fairest construction upon everything; but still he could not help feeling the darkest misgivings as to the result of the approaching trial. And the viscount, rendered keenly observant by intense anxiety, detected these doubts in the mind of his counsel, and became daily more despairing.

He looked forward to the dishonour of a public trial with burning indignation; to the possible—nay, probable—conviction and sentence that might follow with shrinking dread, and to the execution of that sentence with stony horror.

He had often made one of a party of sightseers,

visiting the prisons, the hulks, and quarries, where the prisoners were confined at work. He had seen them in the coarse prison garb, working in gangs under the broiling sun of summer, and under the bitter cold of winter. He had seen them at their meals, and in their sleeping cells. He had gazed upon them with eyes of haughty, cold, unsympathizing curiosity. To him and his friends they formed but a spectacle of interest or amusement, like a drama.

And now, to think that he might—nay, probably would—soon make one of their shameful number!

The Viscount Vincent working in a prison gang! Gazed at by his former companions! Pointed out to curious strangers!

That was the appalling picture for ever present to his imagination!

How bitterly he deplored the crimes that had exposed him to this fate! How deeply he cursed the syren whose fatal beauty had lured him to sin! How passionately he longed for death, as the only deliverance from the memory of the past, the terrors of the present, the horrors of the future!

Day and night that appalling future stared him in the face!

By day it obtruded between him and the face of any visitor that might be with him. Even when in consultation with his counsel his mind would wander from the subject in hand, and his imagination would be drawn away to the contemplation of that dread picture!

By night it would rise up in the darkness and nearly drive him mad!

He could not eat, he could not sleep. He passed his days in pacing to and fro in his narrow cell, and his nights in tossing about upon his restless bed. His sufferings were pitiable, and his worst enemy must have felt sorry for him.

His condition moved the compassion of the warden, and every indulgence that was in the power of old Saundie to bestow was granted to him. And as he was not yet absolutely convicted, but only waiting his trial, these indulgences were considerable. Old Cuthbert was allowed to visit him freely during the day, and to bring him anything in the way of food, drink, clothing, books, stationery, etc., that he required. And very little supervision was exercised over these matters.

Meantime as the assizes were sitting, and the docket was not very full, it was thought that the trial would soon come on.

On the Wednesday following the committal of the viscount, the trial of the murderer Frisbie, which stood before that of his master on the docket, did come on. The detective police had been busy during the interval between Frisbie's arrest and arraignment, and they had succeeded in collecting a mass of evidence and a number of witnesses, besides old Katy.

Frisbie, however, was defended by the best counsel that money could procure. His master, of course, paid the fees.

His counsel very gratuitously instructed him to plead "not guilty," and of course he did plead "not guilty." And his counsel did the best they could to establish his innocence. But the evidence against him was conclusive.

And on the morning of the second day of his trial, Frisbie was found guilty, and sentenced to death.

But a short period between sentence and execution was allowed; and the execution of Frisbie was fixed for the Monday following his conviction.

From the hour that Frisbie had been brought to trial, the viscount had experienced the most vehement accession of anxiety. He refused all food during the day, and he paced the floor of his cell all night. And well he might, for he knew that on that trial, revelations would be made under oath that would not tend to whiten Lord Vincent's character.

On Thursday noon Mr. Bruce entered his cell. "Is the trial—?" began the viscount; but he could not get on; his intense emotion choked him.

"The trial is over; the jury brought in their verdict half-an-hour ago," replied the counsel, gravely.

"And Frisbie is—?" For heaven's sake, speak!" gasped the viscount.

"Frisbie is convicted," said the lawyer.

Lord Vincent, pale before, turned pale still as he sank into the chair, and gazed upon the lawyer, who was greatly wondering at the excessive emotion of his client.

"When is the execution fixed to take place?"

"On Monday, of course."

"Is there—can there be any hope of pardon for him?"

"Not the shadow of a shade of hope."

"Or—of a commutation of his sentence?"

"It is madness to think of it."

"Is there no chance of a respite?"

"I tell you it is madness, and worse than madness, to imagine such a thing as a pardon, a commutation, or even a respite for that wretch! The crime brought home to him was one of the darkest dye—the base

assassination of the girl that loved and trusted and was true to him. To fancy any mercy possible for that miscreant, except it be the infinite, all-embracing, all-pardoning mercy of God, is simply frenzy!"

"And the execution is to take place on Monday! The time is very short!" said the viscount, falling into a reverie.

The lawyer began to speak of the viscount's own affairs; he mentioned several circumstances connected with the viscount's case that had become known to himself only through the testimony of certain witnesses on Frisbie's trial, and he wished to consult the viscount upon them.

But Lord Vincent seemed to act very strangely; he was absent-minded, stupid, distracted—in fact altogether unfit for consultation with his counsel.

And so, after a few unsuccessful attempts to rouse him, gain his attention and fix it upon the subject at issue, the lawyer arose, said that he would call again the next morning, and bowed and left the cell.

The shame the viscount suffered was in the knowledge of the dishonourable facts relating to himself that had been brought to light on Frisbie's trial; the great dread he felt was that Frisbie, at the near approach of death, would open his heart and make a full confession; and his horrible certainty was that such a confession was all that was wanted to ensure his own conviction!

Again on this Thursday night he could not sleep, but paced the narrow limits of his cell the whole night through, in unutterable agony of mind. Never was the appalling vision of himself in the shameful prison garb, pointed out as an interesting object and gazed at by curious strangers, so awfully vivid as upon this night.

The next morning, when his old servant Cuthbert entered the cell as usual, he was frightened at his master's dreadful looks.

"Will I call a doctor to your lairdship?" inquired the old man.

"No, Cuthbert; I am not ill. I am only suffering for want of rest. I have not been able to sleep since Frisbie's arraignment. He is convicted, you know."

"Aye, me laird, I ken a' anent it! My brither Randy was on the jury, and he tauld me it a' ower a pet o' ale in the tap-room o' the 'Highlander,' where I was resting while my horses fed," said the old man, gravely.

A dark, crimson flush overspread the face of the viscount.

Cuthbert had heard all about it. Cuthbert had heard, then, those disgraceful revelations concerning himself. He need not have blushed before Cuthbert. That loyal-hearted old servant could not have been brought to believe such evil of his beloved young master, as all that came to; and his next words proved this.

"There must a been a deal o' fause swearing, me laird," he said.

The viscount looked up and caught at the words.

"Yes, Cuthbert, a great deal of false swearing, indeed, as far as I am concerned, in that testimony."

"Aye, me laird! I tauld them so in the tap-room. There was a wheen idle loons collected there, drinking, and smoking, and talking anent the business o' their betters. And they were a' unco' free in their comments. But when they mentioned your lairdship's name in connection wi' sic infamy, I tauld them a' weel that they were a pack o' fause knaves to believe sic lees!"

"Yes. The execution is to take place on Monday mornin', Cuthbert?"

"Aye, me laird! I hope the puir sinfu' lad will mak' guid use o' the short time left him, and repent o' a' his misdeeds, and seek his peace wi' his Maker," said the old man, solemnly.

The viscount heaved a heavy sigh—a sigh that seemed laden with a weight of agony.

"Cuthbert," he said, "you know that I may not go to see the condemned man, being a prisoner myself; but you, being a fellow-servant, and at liberty, may be permitted to do so. I wish to charge you with a note to deliver to him; but you must deliver it secretly, Cuthbert—secretly, mind you!"

"Yes, me laird."

The viscount sat down to his little table, and wrote the following note:

"FRISBIE.—While there is life, there is hope; therefore make no confession; for if you do, that confession will destroy your last possibility of pardon or commutation."

"VINCENT."

He folded and sealed this note, and delivered it to Cuthbert, saying:

"Conceal it somewhere about your person, and go to the warden's office and ask leave to see your old fellow-servant; and no doubt you will get it. And when you see him, deliver this note secretly, as I told you."

"Verra weel, me laird," said the old man, going and knocking on the door of the cell to be let out.

The turnkey opened the door, released him, and locked it again.

And the viscount, left alone, paced up and down the floor in unutterable distress of mind.

An hour passed, and then Cuthbert re-entered the cell, wearing a frightened visage.

"Well, Cuthbert, well, did you find an opportunity of delivering the note?"

"Yes, me laird, I did," said the old man, hesitatingly.

"Secretly?"

"Y-yes, me laird."

The viscount looked relieved of a great fear. He saw the great disturbance of his servant's face; but ascribed it to the effect of his interview with the condemned man, and sympathy for his awful position, and he inquired:

"How did Frisbie look, Cuthbert?"

"Like a ghaist; na less! pale as death; trembling like a leaf about to fa'! and waeftly distraught in his mind!"

"Did he get an opportunity of reading my note, while you were with him?"

"Oh, me laird, I maun just tell you! I hope there wasna any great secret in that same note."

The viscount started and stared wildly at the speaker; but everything alarmed Lord Vincent now.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Oh, me laird! I watched my opportunity, and I gie' him the note in secrecy, as your lairdship tauld me; and I stooped and whispered til him in his hugs to keep the note till he was alone, and read it then. But the doited fule, gude forgie' me, didna seem to comprehend; but was loike ane dazed. He just lookit at me and then proceeded to open the note before my face. Whereupon the turnkey lad takit it out fra' his hand, saying that the prisoner being a condemned man, maunna receiver ony faulded paper that hadna passit under the observation of the governor, because sic faulded packets might contain strich-nine or other subtle poison. And sae he took possession o' your note, me laird, before the prisoner could read a word of it; and said he maun carry it to the governor, whilk I suppose he did!"

"Oh, Cuthbert, Cuthbert, the cowardice of that miserable wretch will ruin me!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

"On aye, me laird, dinna rail at the puir sinfu' soul for cowardice. Sure mesel' would be a coward gin I had the waeft woddie before my ees. 'Deed, me laird, and me heart is sair for the mischance o' the note."

"It cannot be mended now, Cuthbert."

The time was drawing near for the closing of the prison doors, and the old man took a dutiful leave of his master, and departed.

On his way down-stairs he was called into the warden's office, and when there he was severely reprimanded for conveying letters to the convict, and forbidden, under pain of punishment, to repeat the offence.

The old man bore the rebuke very patiently, and at the lecture that was bestowed upon him, he humbly bowed and took his leave.

This night the viscount, exhausted by long vigilance and fasting, and by intense anxiety, threw himself upon his bed and slept for a few hours.

The next morning, Saturday, in his restless trouble, he arose early. And in the course of the day he questioned every one who came into his cell concerning the state of mind of the condemned man.

Some could give him no news at all; others could tell him something; but they differed in their accounts of Frisbie—one saying that he had asked for the prison chaplain, who had gone to him; a second that he was very contrite; a third that he was only terribly frightened; a fourth that he was firm as a rock, declined to confess his guilt, and persisted in declaring his innocence.

The viscount tried to believe the last statement.

The miserable day passed without bringing anything more satisfactory to Lord Vincent. And the night that followed was a sleepless one to him.

Sunday came; the last day of life that was left to the wretched valet. On Sunday it was obligatory on all the prisoners confined in the gaol to attend divine service in the prison chapel. They had no choice in this matter; unless they were confined to their beds by illness, they were obliged to go.

On this particular Sunday no prisoner felt disposed to place himself on the sick list. Quite the contrary. For many prisoners who were really ill, in the infirmary, declared themselves well enough to get up and go to chapel.

The reason of their sudden zeal in the performance of their religious duties was simply this: The "condemned sermon," as it was called, was to be preached that day. And the condemned man, who was to be executed in the morning, was to be present under guard. And people generally have a morbid curiosity to gaze upon a man who is doomed to death.

Lord Vincent was ill enough to be exempt from the duty of appearing in the chapel, and haughty enough to recoil from mixing publicly with his fellow-prisoners; but he was intensely anxious to see Frisbie and judge for himself, from the man's appearance, whether he seemed likely to make a confession.

And so, when the turnkey, whose duty it was to attend to his ward, came round to unlock the doors and marshal the prisoners in order to march them to chapel, Lord Vincent, without demur, fell into rank and went with them.

The chapel was small, and the prisoners present on this day filled it. The set to which Lord Vincent belonged were marched in among the last. Consequently they sat at the lower end of the chapel.

Lord Vincent's height enabled him to look over the heads of most persons present. And he looked around for Frisbie. At length he found him.

The condemned man was immediately before the pulpit, facing the preacher. In it sat Frisbie, unfettered, but guarded by two turnkeys, one of whom sat on each side of him. But Frisbie's back was towards Lord Vincent, and so the viscount could not possibly get a glimpse of the expression of his face.

He next looked to see if he could find the selfish wizen who had lured him to his ruin, and whom he now hated with all the power of hatred latent in his soul. But a partition eight feet high, running nearly the whole length of the chapel and stopping only within a few feet of the pulpit, separated the women's from the men's side of the church, so that even if she had been present he could not have seen her.

"The Wages of Sin is Death."

Such was the text from which the sermon was preached to the prisoners that day.

But the viscount heard scarcely one word of it. Intensely absorbed in his own reflections, he paid no attention to the services. At their close he bent his eyes again upon the form of Frisbie.

His perseverance was rewarded. As the prisoners arose to leave the chapel, Frisbie also arose and turned around. And the viscount got a full view of his face—a pale, wild, despairing face.

"He is desperately frightened, if he is not penitent! That is the face of a man who, in the forlorn hope of saving his life, will deny his guilt until the rope is around his neck, and then, in the forlorn hope of saving his soul, confess his crime under the gallows," said the viscount to himself, as he was marched back to his cell.

In that the viscount wronged Frisbie. The great adversary himself is said to be not so black as he is painted.

That same night, that last solemn night of the criminal's life, the prison chaplain staid with the wretched man. Mr. Godfree was a fervent Christian; one whose faith could move mountains; one who would never abandon a soul, however sinful, to sink into perdition while that soul remained in its mortal tenement.

He kept close to Frisbie; he would not permit himself to be discouraged by the sinfulness, the cowardice, and the utter baseness of the poor wretch. He pitied him; talked to him; prayed with him.

With all his deep criminality, Frisbie was certainly not hardened. He listened to the exhortations of the chaplain, he wept bitterly, and joined in the prayers.

And in the silence of that night he made a full confession to the chaplain, with the request that it might be made public the next day.

He confessed to the murder of Ailsie Dunbar; but he denied that the crime had been premeditated, as it had been made to appear at the trial. He killed her in a fit of passion, he said; and he had never known an hour's peace since. Remorse for the crime and terror for its consequences had made his life wretched. His master, Lord Vincent, he said, had been an eyewitness to the murder; but had withheld himself from denouncing him, because he wanted to use the power he had thus obtained to compel him to enter a conspiracy against Lady Vincent.

And here followed a full account of the plot and its execution.

Frisbie went on to say that nothing but the terrors of death induced him to become a party to that base conspiracy against the honour of a noble lady, and that he had suffered almost as much remorse for his crimes against Lady Vincent as for his murder of Ailsie Dunbar.

All this Mr. Godfree took down in shorthand from the lips of the conscience-stricken man.

And then, as Frisbie expressed the desire to spend the remainder of the night in devotion, Mr. Godfree decided to remain with him.

So the night passed there.

But how did it pass in the viscount's cell? Sleeplessly, anxiously, wretchedly, until long after midnight, when he fell asleep. He was awakened by a sound of sawing, dragging, and hammering, that seemed to be in the prison-yard beneath his windows.

It continued a long time, and effectually banished slumber from his weary eyes.

What could they be doing at that unusual hour? he asked himself. And he crept from his bed and peeped through the grated window. But the night was overclouded and deeply dark with that darkness that precedes the dawn. He could see nothing, but he could hear the sound of voices amid the noise of work; though the words, at the distance his window was from the ground, were inaudible.

He lay down again no wiser than he had risen up. After an hour or two the noise ceased, and he dropped into that sleep of prostration that more resembles worn-out nature's swooning than healthy slumber.

(To be continued.)

JUDGE HARDING'S BIRTHDAY-GIFT.

SLOWLY and wearily Judge Harding ascended the steps of his stately but gloomy mansion. Not one of its many rooms were lighted, with the exception of the library and that used in common by the two domestics.

Yet there had been a time when those darkened and deserted chambers had been one blaze of light, and its walls had echoed to the sound of merry laughter and gay young voices.

Judge Harding entered the library, and closing the door, looked drearily around. Yet it was filled with all the appliances of wealth and luxury; the carpet was like velvet to the foot, and lofty walls were decked with pictures, and the wide, deep windows hung with wine-coloured drapery of the richest silk.

A large, easy chair was wheeled in front of the fire, which gave forth a ruddy glow; across it lay a dressing gown, while on the rug were slippers, all ready for his feet.

But Judge Harding knew that this was the work of old Margery, his housekeeper, who, though she had been in his service nearly two score years, feared more than she loved him.

There was no eye to brighten at his approach, no voice to welcome him.

This thought was uppermost in the old man's mind as, leaning back in his chair, he gazed abstractedly into the fire.

Some years before God had called to himself the wife of his youth; taken her mercifully from the evil to come. One of the sons she had borne him filled a drunkard's grave, the other had been drowned at sea.

But Estelle, his little Estelle, the ewe lamb of his flock, loved beyond all the others, and yet who had wounded his heart so sorely, where was she?

Ah, well he knew that the December snow was falling fast upon her grave; that she died unsoothed by the knowledge of his forgiveness.

The iron-grey locks that shaded his temples accorded well with the general expression of the strongly-marked features, and which were characterized by a hardness and coldness almost repelling, yet through it all could be seen traces of a depth of mental anguish of which weaker natures are incapable.

He was aroused from the gloomy reverie into which he had fallen by old Margery, who, opening the door, said:

"There is a woman with a little girl in the hall who insists upon seeing you."

"Did she give her name?"

"She said that her name was Dugald," returned Margery, speaking with evident hesitation.

But contrary to her expectations, this mention of a name hated above all others produced no visible effect upon his master.

"Show her in," he said, after a moment's reflection.

It was difficult to determine the age of the woman who entered. Her hair was nearly white, but her eyes bright and piercing, and her tall, strongly-built form as erect as in early life.

Though evidently a person of little education, her countenance and bearing indicated an unusual amount of will and energy, combined with no little shrewdness and effrontery.

Judge Harding evidently saw all this in the steady look with which he regarded her.

"You are the mother of the late Richard Dugald?"

"I am the mother of your late daughter's husband, Judge Harding!"

The proud old man winced visibly at this thrust, but did not lose his self-possession.

"And this is the child of your son?" he inquired, pointing to a lovely little girl of six, clad in deep mourning, who was standing by her side.

"This is the daughter of Richard and Estelle Dugald; your grandchild and mine, Judge Harding!" returned the woman, in the same sharp, defiant tone.

Judge Harding could not controvert this statement,

humbling as it was, but his voice took a harsher tone, as he said:

"Why have you brought her to me?"

"Because I have not the means of supporting her, and you have."

"Did your late son have no property?"

For a moment the woman's eyes wavered beneath his penetrating look, then she said boldly:

"Nothing but a mere pittance, which was more than swallowed up by the expenses of your daughter's last sickness."

Judge Harding's eyes blazed with a sudden scorn, that was almost startling.

"Do not hope to delude me so easily!" he cried.

"There is not one act of yours that has escaped my notice. I know that your son left property that should have descended to his wife and child, but of which you took possession! I know, also, the grudging care that you bestowed on the deluded girl that your son lured from her friends and home! But let them both pass. I will take the child, and amply indemnify you for every possible expense, but only on condition that you sign this paper, by which you pledge yourself to abstain from all future intercourse with your grandchild."

The woman's eyes sparkled, as she caught a glimpse of the roll of bills in Judge Harding's hand, but she still hesitated.

The sharp-sighted old man saw quickly the cause of this hesitation.

"I wish you distinctly to understand," he said, "that though I will provide for the child, it is not my intention to make her my heir; I shall leave her only sufficient to place her above actual want; the bulk of my property will go to some charitable institution."

As Mrs. Dugald looked upon that resolute countenance she felt that he was in earnest, and without another word she signed the paper, and then taking the money that the judge placed in her hand, departed.

As soon as the door closed after her, Judge Harding turned to the little girl, who stood regarding him with a timid, wistful look.

"What is your name, child?" he said, abruptly.

"Estelle Harding Dugald," she replied, in a sweet, clear voice, that had a pretty lisp to it.

"Do you know who I am?"

"You are my grandpapa Harding."

Ah, how many pleading voices arose in his heart at these words, but he crushed them down with a stern hand.

"I am not your grandpapa," he said, harshly; "you must never call me by that name!"

The small red lips quivered and the soft brown eyes filled with tears; but without appearing to notice them, Judge Harding gave the bell a hasty pull.

"Margery," he said, as that individual entered, "this little girl is the child of Richard Dugald. I place her, for the present, under your care. See that she has everything that she needs, but do not let her come within my sight or hearing."

Margery cast a look full of pity and tenderness upon the child, who, attracted by her kind, motherly face, sprang eagerly to the hand she held out to her, and then, with a respectful curtsy to the judge, led her from the room.

Weeks came and went. Little Estelle grew dearer every day to the faithful old nurse, who had tended her mother in her helpless infancy. She obeyed strictly her master's injunctions; though many were her inward murmurs at what she termed his unnatural treatment of the child of his only daughter. This was not difficult, for the house was large, and there were some portions of it that the judge never entered. Sometimes, indeed, he heard the pattering of little feet along the corridor that led to some remote apartment, or a sweet, bird-like voice, which fell upon his heart like a strain of half-forgotten music, but that was all.

Perhaps Judge Harding's heart might have softened toward his grandchild had she come to him in any other way; if the daughter he had once idolized had expressed any wish that he should take charge of her. But to have her thrust upon him by the woman whose artful manoeuvres had made his home so desolate, steeled his heart against her.

She was a pretty, sweet-tempered child, with grave, quiet ways, and intelligent beyond her years.

"When is grandpapa's birthday, nurse?" she suddenly inquired one day, nearly two months after her arrival.

"Let me see," replied Margery, her countenance assuming a contemplative expression. "It is the seventh of this month—and, I declare, if that isn't to-day! I remember it well, for it was also the birthday of my poor young mistress, your dear mamma. She would have been twenty-four years old to-day had she lived. Alack! alack! it seems only yesterday that I held her in my arms."

Here the faithful creature wiped away a tear.

"Well, if it is his birthday, I must go and give him this," resumed Estelle, taking a small package from

the pocket of her dress. "Where is he? in the library?"

"Yes. But what are you thinking of, child?" ejaculated Margery, regarding her young charge with a look of amazement. "You must not go in there; Judge Harding will be very angry!"

"I shall be sorry to make him angry, nurse," returned Estelle, with a childish dignity quite in keeping with the little serious face; "but I promised my dear, dear mamma, that I would, and I must do it."

Old Margery looked after her with an expression of astonishment, not unmingled with admiration, as she left the room.

"She's a Harding—one can see that plainly," she muttered, as she resumed her knitting. "The old judge may shut her out from his heart, but he can't deny but what she's his own flesh and blood."

Estelle paused a moment at the door which she had never before dared to approach, and then, as if summoning all her resolution, softly turned the burnished knob and glided in.

Judge Harding sat in his easy-chair, the very picture of dignified ease.

Looking only upon his surroundings, one would have called him a happy and fortunate man; yet many a wayfarer, breasting the fury of the rude March wind, his heart warm with thoughts of the dear ones awaiting his return, was far happier than that lonely and childless old man.

His face was partially turned from the door, and so softly did those little feet fall upon the carpet, that she had nearly reached his knee before he observed her. In spite of his self-command, he started as his eyes fell upon that sweet face.

As for Estelle, her courage failed her as she met that stern, inquiring look.

"I—I beg your pardon!" she faltered. "I only came in to give you this. Mamma bade me give it to you on your birthday, and I could not disobey her."

Judge Harding mechanically took the package from her hand, and with an evident sigh of relief she turned to leave the room.

"Stay, child," interposed the judge; "there is no hurry. Sit down."

Estelle quietly seated herself on the low, velvet-covered ottoman to which he pointed, and Judge Harding proceeded to open the package.

It contained nothing but a gold locket, which he well remembered placing around his daughter's neck on a happy birthday long ago; his birthday and hers, whom he once fondly termed his "birthday-gift." He touched the spring, and it flew open. It was his own likeness, taken in a sitting position. Beside his chair stood a little girl about six. One small hand was laid trustfully in his, the other rested upon his shoulder, while the softly smiling eyes were lifted to his face with a look of childlike confidence and love.

The warm tide of awakened tenderness that swept over him, melted every vestige of the ice that had gathered around his heart. Conscience began to make itself heard. In regard to their unhappy estrangement, had not he been most to blame? Did he not indulge her in every idle whim, until her will grew strong and imperious, and then curb her suddenly and harshly? Had he dealt more gently with her, would she have taken a step that had wrought them both such bitter woe?

As he raised his eyes they fell upon the little form that was sitting where she used to sit so many years ago.

What a marvellous resemblance! It almost seemed to him that it must be her very self!

Ah, well did that dying mother know that nothing she could write would soften that stern heart like this mute remembrance of all she once was to him, or could plead so eloquently for her orphan child! Tears gushed from the old man's eyes, and rising from his seat, he took the child in his arms.

"My dear little Estelle!" he murmured—"my precious birthday-gift! come back after so long a time, to cheer my desolate home! naught but death shall part thee and me!"

That night, when Margery carried in the tea-things, she saw a spectacle that made her kind old heart rejoice: the child of her dear young mistress was sweetly sleeping in her grandfather's arms, whose eyes were fixed upon her with a look of pride and tenderness.

And giving her a wiser love, a more faithful guardianship, she crowned his old age with peace and joy, whom he took from henceforth to his heart as well as home—"his birthday-gift."

M. G. H.

THE IMPORT DUTY ON GRAIN.—A committee appointed by the corn trade represented to the Government some time since that it would be a great convenience if the import duty on grain were levied by weight instead of by measure; the trade generally buy and sell by weight, and it is of importance to the merchants that the returns made of their importations by

the officers of the Customs should correspond, in the principle in which they are calculated, with the accounts between buyer and seller. At present the duty is 1s. per quarter, imposed for revenue and statistical purposes when the corn laws were repealed in 1846. The subject has been referred by the Treasury to the Commissioners of Customs, and they have reported in favour of a duty of 3d. per cwt. on all kinds of grain, including lentils, millet seed, and dard, which are considered fairly liable to the duty. It is calculated that the loss to the revenue by this change would be rather over £2,000 a year; but that is almost inappreciable in a revenue which has fluctuated in three years, from 1859 to 1861, to the extent of £250,000. In 1857 it was under £500,000; in 1862 it exceeded £800,000.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Pretend," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LXXX.

As politicians prostitute their power
To pension knaves—their worthless instruments—
Which, having used, they dare not cast aside
To poverty. *Old Play.*

IN a visit which Quirk paid to the Earl of Moretown, he informed his client of the wish of Ned Cantor to obtain an appointment as consul to one of the rising republics in South America which the genius of Canning had called into existence, to avenge the check which England had received in her policy when a French army, under the command of the Duc d'Angoulême, marched into Spain, to upset the liberal government of the Cortes.

"Consul!" exclaimed the peer; "pooh! the thing is impossible! I question whether the fellow can write his name!"

The lawyer smiled—for he was nowise discouraged by the rebuff. His noble client had not yet seen the economy as well as wisdom of such an arrangement.

He proceeded to point out the inconvenience—now that Mabel was separated from her husband, and under the protection of Sir Cuthbert Sinclair—of having the convict in England; alluded to his restless, intriguing disposition, as well as to certain statements, in the handwriting of the lunatic earl, which had fallen into his possession.

The last consideration at once decided his lordship, who promised to use his interest to procure the desired appointment, provided that the old Bible was given up—an arrangement which Quirk pledged himself to see carried out.

"The great difficulty," observed the earl, "is in the fellow's name—it has been made so notorious lately!"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"And the newspapers," continued the speaker, "grow more and more intractable every day! Would you imagine it?" he added, "the viscount's boyish follies have been as severely handled by the press as if he had been in the ministry! It required all his uncle's interest to get him aloft again!"

"Has his lordship sailed?" inquired his visitor.

"Two days since, in the *Revenge*."

"The press, my lord," observed the man of law, after a few moments' consideration, "certainly is a most prying, censorious, unmanageable power to deal with; but in the present instance it may be baffled."

"How?"

"Let the appointment be made out in the name of Edward Canton, Esquire, instead of Cantor! A paragraph might appear in the government journals, stating that it had been conferred as an acknowledgment of important scientific, or political services performed by that distinguished *avant* in the East! Take my word, it will pass unquestioned."

The peer looked rather doubtful.

"Added to which, your lordship will save three hundred a year, and rid yourself of a troublesome tenant at Bordercleugh!"

The last considerations overcame the hesitation of the noble peer. The place was promised; and in less than a week Edward Canton, Esquire, was gazetted as his Britannic Majesty's consul for the port of —, in South America.

As soon as Mabel was sufficiently recovered to endure the journey, Sir Cuthbert and Lady Sinclair left London for their seat in Scotland. It was a fine old castellated mansion, erected originally by Alexander II., to protect the entrance to the Frith of Forth.

Formerly it had been called Cairn Colm, or Colm's Hill—which in the course of time had got corrupted to Colmsil.

For many reasons Sir Cuthbert had been extremely anxious to quit London for his quiet residence in the north. The principal one was that his young wife promised to become a mother, and the old soldier natu-

rally felt desirous that the heir to his name and title should be born in the home of his forefathers.

In their way to the north, the baronet had stopped a few hours at the village near Bordercleugh, in order to visit the young farmer, Frank Hazleton, and his sister, from whom he extorted, rather than obtained, a promise to visit Colmsil. The baronet was anxious to show his gratitude. Bell's hesitation proceeded only from fear for the happiness of her brother, whose passion for Margaret she perceived was subdued, but not extinct.

The baronet and his lady had not arrived more than a few days at their northern abode, before Charles and Mary joined them.

The bracing effect of the Highland air produced a more visible effect upon the health of her mother than upon Lady Sinclair, whose cheek retained its paleness.

If for an instant it flushed with some transitory emotion, the colour faded almost as quickly as it came.

By all the household of the baronet their new mistress was received with the most profound respect; there was but one exception—and that, in a Highland family, was an important one—the nurse.

Madge Neil had been born and lived all her life at Colmsil. Gradually she had risen to her present confidential position in the family; every one looked up to her. From some unaccountable cause, she had taken a violent aversion to her new lady.

This aversion at last became so apparent, that Sir Cuthbert was compelled to notice it—he perfectly understood it. The old woman had been his nephew's nurse, and she loved the wayward Harry with all the passionate devotion which generally accompanies that tie in Scotland.

The baronet was one of those men who no sooner perceive an evil, than they commence at once to remedy it. About three weeks after his return, he sent for Madge into the library.

The old woman received the message with a demure countenance, and prepared to meet her hitherto indulgent master.

"Madge," said Sir Cuthbert, "how long have you lived in my family?"

"Abune sixty years!" was the reply. "Ye ken that weel yourself, Sir Cuthbert, seeing that we were bairns together! Was I no born here, as my forbears before me?"

"Eight—and you have been kindly treated?"

"I'll no gainsay it."

"And trusted?"

"If I have been," replied the old woman, "I merited it! I defy any living or dead to say that I ever wrangled the house Sinclair of a hair's worth. Wad others had been as careful of its honour," she added, in a sarcastic tone, at the same time drawing herself up proudly, "as I have been of its gear."

Her master bit his lips. He understood the retort, but did not choose to reply to it.

"The fact is," he continued, "that I have been thinking of your long services, and that you are growing old!"

"We are neither of us over young!" somewhat sarcastically observed the nurse.

"And as the change which has lately taken place in my family does not seem to meet with your approbation, the best thing you can do is to retire from Colmsil, and reside with your grand-daughter, who is married, in the village."

"Retire frae Colmsil?" repeated the woman; "and why for should I retire? Was I no born in the house? and, please the Lord, I mean to die in it! But I see," she added, "it is my leddie's doing—she has been setting your mind, Sir Cuthbert, against me, as she did against one who ought to be far dearer to you!"

"Madge," replied the baronet, "you are mistaken; and since the name of Lady Sinclair has been introduced, I must tell you frankly that it is on her account, though not at her request, that I propose to you to quit my family."

"I thought sae!" muttered the old nurse; "I thought sae."

"Had my wife wished your departure, she would at once have ordered it; but I cannot permit consideration for my feelings to be made the daily means of wounding hers. I have noticed with regret you—I will not say want of respect, but positive hostility to your mistress. Still I am willing to part kindly. The sum of fifty pounds a-year shall be paid you by ray steward, as long as you live; but here you can reside no longer."

"And this is your determination?"

"Fixed!"

"Then I'll go at once!" replied Madge Neil, proudly; "it shall be as said that I darkened ony mon's door, or ate his bread against his will. As for your money," she added, "keep it, Sir Cuthbert. Thanks to the dead, was thought more of my services than you do, I'm no in want of your charity."

"I do not consider it charity," observed her master; "but as a just debt due to your past fidelity."

"Call it what you will, I'll no touch a penny of it!"

replied the aged domestic. "Farewell, Sir Cuthbert—you were a guide mon once, before the wiles of an artful woman made you an unjust one to him who ought to ha' been like your ain son!"

"You had better reflect upon my offer."

"It's nae use to reflect: the sooner I'm awa the better. A very few hours will suffice. I'll no break bread or moisten my lips beneath this roof again. But before I leave you," added the speaker, "remember that I hae said naething to dishonour you in the eyes of your ain people. Nae—nae! Madge kept that secret to herself!"

"To dishonour me!" repeated the baronet, with surprise.

"Is it no a dishonour," demanded the nurse, "for an auld mon o' your bluid and name to ally himself to the dochtter of a fellow worse, much worse, than a Highland reiver?—for many o' them pair creatures came at least of good kith and kin! Eh, what a stir and a laugh it will be for the hail kinty side, when gentle and simple shall hear that Sir Cuthbert Sinclair, the oldest baronet in the shire, disinherited his nephew, to marry the dochtter of a convicted thief! Thank God," she added, "that my leddie is dead! though it's enow to make her quit her shroud in the family vault! But of course you'll no be thinking o' putting the likes o' her, should she die, beside her?"

"And how did you hear this?" inquired the baronet, who felt deeply mortified: not that he feared Madge would breathe a syllable upon the subject—she held the family honour too dear for that, however angry the might feel.

The nurse remained silent.

"Tell me!" he added.

"Weel, Sir Cuthbert, I'll e'en be candid wi' ye. It's just nae use your speering, for I'll no tell it. Sin I mune leave the auld place, I leave it in peace wi' you: trusting that you may no hae cause to repent your unnatural conduct to my foster-son, Harry!"

So saying, she quitted the room, and long before the return of Lady Sinclair and her guests, who were absent for a ride, had quitted the castle.

When Margaret heard of her departure, she felt touched by the proof of her husband's solicitude for her happiness. Deeply as she had been pained by the conduct of the old nurse, she had resolved neither to complain of nor notice it.

"He is good—very good!" observed Mabel, to whom she related what had taken place; "and yet I cannot help wishing that he were a younger man!"

Her daughter looked surprised, and demanded the reason of such a wish.

"Because," replied her parent, "you might love him better. There would be a greater chance of your happiness—of his effacing from your heart the memory of one who, with all his ingratitude, I fear, still holds a place there!"

"You are wrong!" replied Margaret, calmly; "quite wrong, dear mother! The Harry whom I once loved, with all the fervour of my young heart, is dead! The Harry Sinclair who survives him is in every sense indifferent to me."

"Save one!" observed Mabel.

"And that is?"

"Revenge! My poor child, simple and ignorant as I am, I can read the heart. It required a feeling no less powerful to induce you to sell yourself!"

"Sell myself!" repeated Lady Sinclair.

"Aye! You cannot love this man, good and kind as he is!" continued Mabel; "I have seen the struggle tried before, and fail. In the present fever of excitement, you may imagine that you do!"

"I respect him, mother!" interrupted her child; "respect him deeply, as a parent, a friend, a husband; and if I cannot entertain towards him the love I once felt, it is because it is seared! I shall never feel such love again!"

"Pray heaven you may not!" sighed her parent; "it would be a fearful trial! But I am glad—very glad," continued the speaker, "that you have vanquished your passion for Harry Sinclair, who is justly punished for his ungenerous conduct towards you!"

"He will be!" replied her daughter, with a smile of triumph. "Oh, how I should like to see him, when he hears that I have given an heir to the name and the lands of which he felt so proud! The serpent will be paid in his own coin!"

About a month after the above conversation, a vessel having more the appearance of a smuggler than a yacht, cast anchor at the entrance of the Frith of Forth. It was about the hour of sunset, and the hills on either side were partially clothed with mist.

In addition to the sailors who manned the vessel, there were two persons upon deck—Ned Cantor and Harry Sinclair.

"They will never detect you!" observed the former, addressing Harry, who was disguised with a profusion of false hair and a beard and moustache.

"Those who love him might not!" observed the

ex-captain of the smuggling vessel, whom they had engaged to sail the Shark.

"That implies," observed the young man, "that those who hate me might?"

The captain nodded assent.

"I think I shall venture, despite your prediction! You will have the boat waiting?"

"Aye—aye!"

"And be ready, the instant I approach the shore, to embark?"

"Leave that to us!" replied Ned; "Will and I will keep a sharp look out—you may trust to us! Lower the boat there."

Two of the worthies lowered the boat, and the three speakers, stepping into her, pulled rapidly towards the shore, where, the instant they touched, Harry Sinclair landed. His object was to reach Colmsail, and obtain an interview with his old nurse, of whose fidelity he felt assured.

He knew not that the suspicions of his uncle had already driven her from the castle.

As he passed through the village which skirted the foot of the domain which he had for so many years considered as his inheritance, a light streamed through the open window of one of the cottages athwart his path, and he heard a voice crooning an old ballad which he remembered to have heard in childhood.

He could not be deceived—the voice was that of his aged nurse, Madge Neil.

He entered the house, first having ascertained that the old woman was alone.

"Madge!" he said.

"I should know that voice!" said the nurse, starting from her seat; "the earth must be trampled on my coffin ere I forget it! Harry, my bairn—my foster —"

"Hush!" whispered the young man, leading her to a seat. "I was on my way to the castle, to endeavour to speak with you. But tell me by what happy accident do I find you here?"

"Accident!" repeated the old woman, sharply; "it's no accident. Your uncle saw I did not love his baby-brid—so he turned me out of the old place, to die here!"

The young man secretly cursed the savage fidelity of the speaker, which, by rendering her obnoxious to his intended victim, had removed her from the spot where she could have been so useful. He had, however, only his own indiscretion to blame for it, in having informed her of all that had taken place.

"It was not like Sir Cuthbert!" he said.

"Let me do him nae wrang," replied Madge, eagerly; "he would have given me mooney—a yearly dole as long as I lived; but I wanted none of his gowd."

"I am sorry that you left."

"Why so?"

"Because you could have been of use to me."

"I shall soon cease to be of use to any one," observed the old woman, with a dissatisfied air. "The new leddie—for leddie she is, had her father been hanged a dozen times—will soon be a mither. Should it prove a boy," she added, in a despairing tone, "the best bluid in a Scotland will be sullied at the fountain-head."

"And I beggar!" added Harry.

"E'en so! E'en so!"

The information that Margaret was likely to become a mother only increased his determination, by a bold step, at once to remove her from her husband. He felt neither remorse nor shame at the atrocious act he contemplated—for love had long since given place to hate.

"Must this be?" he said.

"Must what be?"

"Are there no means, nurse," he inquired, "of preventing this disgrace to the blood and name of Sinclair? Had you remained at the house, the affair would have been easy. As it is, you have ruined all. The hope on which I most relied has forsaken me."

"But I'll not forsake you!" replied Madge Neil, stung by the bitter reproaches and passion of her foster-son.

"How can you serve me now?"

"Leave that to me. I ken mair o' Colmsail than any living being. They may bar and lock the doors; but no against me. Tell me your plans—I'll find the means to aid them."

A long and confidential conversation ensued, in which Harry disclosed his purpose towards his aunt. The old woman listened attentively and approvingly.

"And you have a vessel?" she said.

"In the Forth."

"A fast sailer?"

"It beat the revenue cutter."

"Good—good!" muttered the nurse to herself.

"The rest regards me! I'll find the means to wile her from the house she has disgraced, and you must do the rest."

"Trust to me,"

CHAPTER LXXXI.

Who says he loves, and is not wretched, lies!
What can we do but love? It is our cup!
Love is the cross and passion of the heart—
Its end and errand!

P. J. Bayley.

It was not without considerable reluctance and misgiving, that Bell Hazleton accepted the warmly-pressed invitation of Sir Cuthbert Sinclair to visit Colmsail, for she feared the effect upon the happiness of her brother. It was the impossibility of assigning a reason for her refusal which decided her.

Since their return from London, the character of the young farmer had undergone a complete change. He was no longer the gay and animated Frank Hazleton. His former amusements, the sports of the field, and his occupation on the farm, were alike neglected. To his sister his manners were kind and affectionate as usual; but to every one else he appeared silent and moody.

It was evident that he nourished a deep but hopeless passion, which Bell, with the true instinct of her sex, felt convinced was the more profound, from the simple fact of his carefully avoiding all allusion to the object of it.

"If he would only speak of her," thought the kind-hearted girl, "I should have some hope. The wound of the heart is something like a cut finger—as soon as it bears exposure to the air, we know that it is healing; but Frank's hurt is not yet skinned over."

Then, to chase away the painful reflections which the sorrow of her only brother inspired, she would busy herself in the affairs of the household, or attend to her duties in the dairy.

As the time for their departure drew near, the young farmer appeared more restless than usual. Frequently, he would start suddenly from his chair, walk to the window, gaze upon the landscape for a few moments, and then return to his chair without a word. At other times he would sit absorbed, apparently, in some volume. If Bell happened to leave the room, and return in an hour or two, she invariably found his eye fixed upon the same page as when she left him.

Bitterly did she regret that Mabel had ever disclosed to her brother and herself the reasons which induced Margaret to accept the hand of Sir Cuthbert Sinclair.

Several times she had determined to propose writing to the baronet, and plead the necessity of attending to the farm as an excuse for putting off their visit. Next she thought of coming to some explanation with her brother, and reasoning with him on his madness; but his deep dejection, and the imploring glance he gave, if she only alluded to the subject, restrained her.

Poor Bell! Considering that she had no love-sorrows of her own, her position was a perplexing one.

Her time had not come yet.

"Frank," said his sister, as they were sitting in the little parlour of the farm, the evening before their departure, "I wish you would give up this visit to Scotland. I can easily find an excuse."

"An excuse!" he repeated.

"A reason, then," she continued, "if you prefer the word. I cannot tell how the dread of it oppresses me. We are neither of us suited to mingle in the circle we shall meet at Sir Cuthbert Sinclair's. You cannot conceal your feelings from me," she added; "you have not yet subdued your love for Margaret."

"You are all reason—cold, calculating reason," exclaimed her brother, pettishly. "You have neither sympathy nor pity for my feelings."

"It is not by sympathy or pity," urged the right-thinking girl, "that I can hope to cure you of this folly. I have only you, Frank, in the world to love or look up to since our parents died; and I cannot see your energies wasted in idle dreams—the promise of your manhood blighted—without making an effort to save you! If you require change," she added, "go to London. I will manage the farm. Shake off this unmanly dependency. Do anything that may arouse you. Go anywhere, except to Scotland."

"You are like the world, Bell!" exclaimed the young man, bitterly. "Nothing is more easy than to advise. It is by my own folly," he added, impetuously, "that I have lost her. It was not the wealth, the rank of Sir Cuthbert which won her, but the necessity of a protector. Had I spoken like a man, instead of standing in her presence like a shame-faced boy, I might have been that protector."

"These regrets are useless now."

"Are they less keen," demanded the young man, "because they are useless? By my assiduity and tenderness, in time, I should have won her love. Had I been her husband, I should like to have seen the high-born scoundrel that would have polluted her ears with his insulting proffers! This arm should have protected her more efficiently than the withered detard's who—"

"Frank!" interrupted his sister, in a tone which once more brought the colour to the cheek of the young farmer; "it is thus you speak of the man

whose guest you are about to become? Shame, Frank—shame!”

“God help me!” sighed the unhappy lover, at the same time burying his face in his hands. “I am truly wretched. I must do something,” he added, after a pause. “The farm is hateful to me. Inactivity will kill me. At present I can scarcely believe that she is another’s. I will go to Scotland! I will see Margaret! Perhaps the sight of her, in the house of her husband, may dispel my dreams, and cure this fever of my heart and brain!”

“Aye!” said Bell, mournfully, “as ice to frost—as fire to oil! This is madness!” she added. “In your folly you will compromise her happiness, as well as your own. Should Sir Cuthbert perceive your passion, what might he not suspect?”

“Nothing derogatory to her purity and honour!” replied Frank Hazleton, firmly. “No, no. The love I bear her is too true for that. I would not insult her ear by a word that would offend its purity; but go I will, and must—even though I go alone.”

The contest was ended. His sister had done all that she could to prevent the danger she foresaw, and she at once made up her mind to accompany him: her presence would at least be a restraint.

Still it was not without great reluctance that the pretty rustic bade adieu to the farm. Her heart felt oppressed by one of those vague presentiments of ill which, like the rising mists, foreshadow the approaching storm. Her household pets were visited, and her instructions reiterated to the servants for the management of the dairy in her absence. Never before had she quitted her home so reluctantly: she felt as if the parting was for ever.

Finding himself no longer opposed in the wish nearest to his heart, Frank’s mind became more composed.

The fearful excitement which so long had agitated him gave place to a melancholy calm, and Bell hoped, almost against hope, that the dreaded visit might pass off without her brother betraying the secret she was so anxious to conceal from all the world.

Colmsil was situated in an extensive park, richly wooded, and well stocked with deer. From the north front the Frith of Forth was visible, the mansion not being more than four miles from the beach, on which the boats of the fishermen were drawn up beyond the influence of the tide.

On the morning appointed for the arrival of their visitors, Lady Sinclair and Mary, tempted by the beauty of the day, had strolled into the grounds, to enjoy the beauty of the scene, and catch the invigorating breeze which swept from the sea.

The two friends were seated on a rustic bench beneath the branches of a wide-spreading oak. For some time they had enjoyed the beauty of the scene in silence.

“You are sad!” observed Mary, who was the first to speak. “What would I not give to hear once more your merry laugh, as it echoed in happier days through the woods of the dear old holm.”

“Do not speak of it,” replied Margaret, with a sigh; “it recalls—and yet why should I wish to avoid speaking of it?” she added, “since she is ever present to my memory.”

“You must conquer this weakness,” observed Mrs. Briancourt.

“Would that I could,” replied Lady Briancourt, with a sigh.

“Is the wound so deep, then?”

“It has reached the heart,” said the unhappy girl; “but not from the quarter you suppose.”

Her companion appeared surprised.

“You and Charles doubtless imagine,” continued the speaker, “that the recollection of Harry—you see I can pronounce his name, and my lips do not even quiver, or my voice tremble—embitters my existence—has driven the blush of health from my cheek! You are mistaken—it is the reproach of my own heart!”

“The reproaches of your own heart!” repeated Mary; “impossible! Oh, may my breast ever contain as pure and true one as that which beats in yours.”

“In ceasing to respect Harry Sinclair,” continued Margaret, “without heeding the observation, ‘I ceased to love him. More—his unmanly, cold, calculating persecution excited my resentment. Unfortunately, his uncle’s predilection placed a fearful weapon in my hands; and my revenge, like the sting of the scorpion, has recoiled on my own head!’”

“I am aware that you do not—cannot—love Sir Cuthbert as you might have loved.”

“It is not that—it is not that!” interrupted her ladyship. “I respect him—venerate him as a parent—as the kindest, truest friend: but I am about to become a mother, Mary—to give an heir, perhaps, to his proud name—and I tremble at the thought!”

“Tremble!” repeated her sister, more and more surprised.

“Something must be wrong,” continued Margaret, “when the parent fears to see the face of her first-born child! Should it live to reproach me with the infamy

of my birth—curse the weakness of its father, who took a felon’s daughter as his wife—it would kill me! I see it all!” she added, with increased excitement; “my crime and punishment! Said I not truly, that my revenge has fallen upon myself?”

“No!” replied her sister, firmly; “you have not spoken truly—for you are unjust to yourself! Your boy—should it prove one—will live to love his mother—to be proud of her virtues and sufferings. At the first cry of your infant,” she added, “these morbid feelings will vanish—nature is stronger than reason!”

Lady Sinclair faintly smiled at the pleasing picture, and for the first time a ray of hope dawned within her desolate heart.

“See,” continued the speaker, “how bravely you vessel enters the Frith—how proudly it dashes the billows from its bows! Imitate it, Jane, and cast aside the gloomy thoughts and forebodings which oppress you, as carelessly as the galleon ship breasts the opposing surge!”

“I will endeavour to do so,” replied her companion; “but, like the waves, I fear they will return.”

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Charles and Sir Cuthbert, who had been shooting in the home preserves.

“I fear,” observed the baronet, as he offered his arm to his young wife, “that you find Colmsil dull. If you wish for the world, Margaret, you have only to say the word—I live but in the hope of rendering you happy.”

The object of his solicitude replied to him by a look of grateful affection, and assured him that she desired no further change.

“I am glad of it, for my poor tenants’ sake,” observed the baronet; “for they would miss us sadly. But come,” he added, “it is time that we returned to the house, or our guests will arrive before us.”

They had not long reached home before the carriage of Sir Cuthbert, which had been despatched to meet Frank Hazleton and his sister, was seen driving up the avenue. Before it reached the mansion, the inmates were assembled in the old gothic porch, to welcome their arrival.

There was the usual shaking of hands and kind greetings. It was a fortunate thing for the young farmer that the meeting between him and Lady Sinclair took place before so many witnesses—it enabled him to master his emotion. Bell, who had trembled for his firmness when Margaret—who dreamed not of the passion she had inspired—cordially extended her hand, felt relieved when the reception was over.

Charles undertook to show Frank to his room, whilst his wife and their hostess took charge of his sister.

The visitors had only time to change their travelling dresses before the second bell rang for dinner: thus much of the awkwardness of the arrival was got over.

Bell, who had never before seen the sea, was delighted with the view from Colmsil; to her simple taste, the stately old mansion of the baronet appeared a palace. Parties of pleasure were discussed, and, long before they adjourned to the drawing-room, excursions for a week at least were already planned. Charles and Frank were to escort them on the water to the Monk’s Dell and the picturesque cavern in the neighbourhood.

“Very well,” said the baronet, with a good-humoured smile; “but I can’t permit you to monopolise all my young friend’s time. Frank must ride with me: I want him to inspect my farms, which I suspect are capable of great improvement under the English system, which doubtless he understands.”

“Perfectly!” eagerly answered his sister, who had listened to the previous arrangement with secret misgiving; “he has already introduced it upon our own farm; the first year the neighbours all laughed at his new-fangled ways, as they termed them; the second, they confessed they were not quite so foolish as they had imagined; and the third, half the farmers in the parish imitated them, Frank, I am certain,” she added, “will be delighted to be of service to your tenants, Sir Cuthbert.”

The young farmer cast a reproachful glance at the speaker, as he muttered something about being delighted—honoured—and his poor abilities.

When the party adjourned to the drawing-room, Mary and Lady Sinclair played and sang alternately: the latter asked Frank if he could not sing.

“No—that is very little!” replied the young man, blushing deeply.

“Very little is a confession,” observed Charles, laughingly; “so you have no excuse.”

“But mine are all such simple, old-fashioned songs,” and “And we are simple old-fashioned people,” said the baronet; “you are fairly in for it—there is no excuse.”

Mary—who, with her woman’s tact, guessed what was passing in the mind of the young farmer—offered to accompany him: she felt that he would be less embarrassed than if Margaret performed the office of pianist for him.

Frank Hazleton knew that he sang well—yet he was

far from feeling any confidence in the knowledge. His voice trembled, and it was not till he reached the last verse of the following song, that he was enabled to convey the expression of the words, which were adapted to an air well known amongst the Covenanters—

My childhood’s prayer, how sweet it rose,
At morning’s blush or evening’s close,
When lisping from my mother’s knee,
In words from guleful accents free,
These simple words my lips addressed:
Lord, not as I, but thou see’st best;
My only hope, a race well run—
My only prayer—Thy will be done.

My manhood’s prayer—alas! ’twas stained—
Earth’s passions wild its words profaned;
Ambition here—the angel’s sin,
Which lost the heaven it sought to win;
Love’s mad desire, or vain regret,
Which e’en in memory linger yet;
The sinful hope, the wild despair,
Were mingled in my manhood’s prayer.

My age’s prayer, though mourning still,
Life’s chequered page of good and ill,
From passion’s storm is calm and free,
As the first smile of infancy.
No more the slave of feelings wild,
Humble and meek as when a child;
My age’s prayer—as life’s sands run—
Is once again—Thy will be done.

“Your brother has a very sweet voice,” observed Lady Sinclair, in a whisper to Bell; “pity he has not more confidence. The words of his song, too, please me very much!”

“I am glad you like them,” replied the affectionate girl.

Margaret looked at her with surprise.

“They are his own composition,” continued the speaker; “but do not let Frank know I told you so; he would never forgive me! He would fear,” she added, half-regretting her confidence, “to appear vain in singing his own production in your presence!”

Lady Sinclair made no reply, but the idea struck her that the writer must have suffered much, ere such sentiments could have been wrung from him. The song of youth is one of gladness, unless the heart has been prematurely withered, and its hopes and feelings turned to ashes.

The words of the song haunted her; and Frank Hazleton, as the writer, became identified with them.

“Good night, Bell!” said the young farmer, as he parted from his sister in the corridor which led to their respective rooms; “you see I have been firm—your forebodings were vain ones!”

“Perhaps not,” thought Bell, as she kissed her brother; “but, right or wrong, I could wish this visit at an end—that we were both safely back by our own humble fire-side. This place is far too grand and stately for me!”

But, not to discourage him, she kept her opinions and wishes to herself.

(To be continued.)

MAJOR YELVERTON.—The case of this officer came on last week before the House of Lords on the question of alimony. The lady whom the Court of Session in Scotland found to be his wife applied to the House of Lords to decree her alimony out of her husband’s estate. Their lordships ordered that she should be allowed £150, and at the same time directed that the papers in the case should be lodged in time to allow the appeal to be disposed of in the course of the present session.

SINGULAR DISCOVERY OF THE SKELETON OF A WHALE.—The *Stirling Journal* states that the other day, whilst workmen employed in extending the erection at the brick and tile works at Cornton siding were cutting the foundation base for a wall, they came upon the skeleton of a whale of very large size. The remains lie embedded at a depth of between five and six feet in the blue alluvial deposit popularly known as the boulder clay. Some idea of the size of the animal will be gained when it is known that the spinal vertebrae have been ascertained to lie across a space of 25 feet.

PORT SUMNER.—The following is an extract from a letter dated February 22:—“We were obliged to go by night, as the fort is only situated 1,400 yards from Battery Gregg, from where the Yankees generally shell the place night and day, and would sink you in a minute did not the darkness cover your approach. We started about 6 o’clock. It had just got dark, and after an hour’s sail we reached it. 85,000 shells have now been thrown against this devoted place, a mass of iron equal to 3,000 tons of iron. Several times the flagstaff has been shot away, and as quickly replaced, and still the cry is ‘no surrender.’ The place, as we approached it, looked like a mound in the middle of the water. All of a sudden the moon burst forth, and showed us the place with the distinctness of day. The scene is deeply impressed on my memory. The place looked as if an earthquake had taken place, and thrown down the walls, or like some magnificent ruin

which the hand of time had desolated. The jagged edges of the walls standing out in bold relief, with the sentries pacing slowly up and down the ramparts, made it truly an impressive sight. Fortunately, they were not shelling when I was there; it being very well protected by sandbags, however, in place of the walls, very few men get hit. The fort is about four acres in size, all the walls are down except the west on the side of the city, which is partly so: however, it is stronger than ever, and it will long prove a thorn in the side of the Yankees.

CURIOUS CUSTOM WITH GREEK SAILORS.—The following curious custom was observed on board several Greek vessels in Liverpool on Good Friday:—The men stuffed an old jacket and trousers with straw, and fashioned the garments so as to represent Judas Iscariot. This they hung up to the yard-arm of the ship, and treated it with every sort of indignity that it was possible to offer an effigy of such a traitor. After beating it with ropes, &c., they set it on fire and flung it into the water.

PAID IN FULL.

"So much gone! I might have known how it would be!" said Mr. Sterling, looking up from the morning paper, with a most unpleasant expression on his face.

"What is gone?" asked his wife.

"My money is gone," answered Mr. Sterling, fretfully.

"What money?"

"The money I was foolish enough to lend Mr. Granger."

"Why do you say that?"

"He's dead," replied Mr. Sterling coldly.

"Dead!"

The wife's voice was full of surprise and pain. Sorrow overshadowed her face.

"Yes, gone, and my money with him. Here's a notice of his death. I was sure when I saw him go away that he'd never come back, except in his coffin. Why will doctors send their patient from home to die?"

"Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!" sighed Mrs. Sterling. "What will they do?"

"As well without him as with him," was the unfeeling answer of her husband, who was only thinking of the three hundred pounds he had been persuaded to lend the sick clergyman, in order that he might go to a milder climate during the winter. "He's been more of a burden than a support to them these two years."

"Oh, Harvey! How can you speak so?" remonstrated Mrs. Sterling. "A kinder man in his family was never seen. Poor Mrs. Granger! She will be heart-broken."

"Kindness is cheap and easily dispensed," coldly replied Mr. Sterling. "He would have been of more use to his family if he had fed and clothed them better. I have no doubt they can do without him. If I had my three hundred pounds, I wouldn't—"

But he checked for shame—not from any better feeling—the almost brutal words his heart sent up to his tongue.

Not many hundred yards away from Mr. Sterling's handsome residence stood a small, plain cottage, with a garden in front neatly laid out in box-bordered walks and filled with shrubbery. A honeysuckle, twined with a running-rosebud, covered the latticed portico, and looked in at the chamber windows, giving beauty and sweetness.

The hand of taste was seen everywhere—not lavish, but discriminating taste. Two years before there was not a happier home than this in all the pleasant town of C—. Now the shadow of death was upon it.

"Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!" Well might Mrs. Sterling pity them. While her mercenary husband was sighing over the loss of three hundred pounds, the young widow lay senseless with her two little ones weeping over her in childish terror. The news of death found her unprepared.

Only a week before she had received a letter from Mr. Granger, in which he talked hopefully of his recovery. "I am stronger," he said; "my appetite is better; I have gained five pounds in flesh since I left home."

Three days after writing this letter there came a sudden change of temperature; he took cold, which was followed by congestion of the lungs; and no medical skill was sufficient for the case. The body was not sent home for interment.

When the husband and father went away, two or three months before, his loved ones looked upon his face for the last time in this world.

Love and honour make the heart strong. Mrs. Granger was a gentle, retiring woman. She had leaned upon her husband very heavily; she had clung to him as a vine. Those who knew her best, felt most anxious about her. "She has no mental stamina," they said; "she cannot stand alone."

But they were mistaken. As we have just said, love and honour make the heart strong. Only a week after Mr. Sterling read the news of the young minister's death, he received a note from the widow.

"My husband," she said, "was able to go to a milder climate in the hope of regaining his health through your kindness. If he had lived, the money you lent him would have been faithfully returned, for he was a man of honour. Dying, he left that honour in my keeping, and I will see that the debt is paid. But you will have to be a little patient with me."

"All very fine," muttered Mr. Sterling, with a slightly curling lip. "I've heard of such things before. They sound well. People will say of Mrs. Gregory, 'What a noble woman! What a fine sense of honour she has!' But I shall never see the three hundred pounds I was foolish enough to lend her husband."

Very much to Mr. Sterling's surprise, and not a little to his pleasure, he discovered about three months afterwards, that he was mistaken in his estimate of Mrs. Granger.

The pale, sad, fragile little woman brought him the sum of twenty-five pounds. He did not see the tears in her eyes as he displayed her husband's note, with its dear familiar writing, and made thereon, with considerable formality, an endorsement of the sum paid.

She would have given many drops of her heart's blood to have been able to clutch that document from Mr. Sterling's hands. His possession of it seemed like a blot on the dear lost one's memory.

"Katie Granger is the queerest little girl I ever knew," said Flora Sterling to her mother, on the evening of the very day on which this first payment was made. Mr. Sterling heard the remark, and letting his eyes drop from the newspaper he was reading, turned his ears to listen.

"I think her a very nice little girl," replied the mother.

"So she is nice," returned the child; "but then she is so queer."

"What do you mean by queer?"

"Oh, she isn't like the rest of us girls. She said the oddest thing to-day. I almost laughed out; but I'm glad I didn't. Three of us, Katie, Lillie Bonfield, and I, were walking during the recess time, when Uncle Sidney came along, and taking out some bright new pieces, he said—'Here's a sixpence for each of you, girls, to buy sugar-plums.' Lillie and I screamed out, and were starting away for the candy-shop in an instant; but Katie stood still, with her share of the money in her hand. 'Come along!' I cried. She didn't move, but looked strange and serious. 'Aren't you going to buy candy with it?' I asked. Then she shook her head gravely and put the sixpence in her pocket, saying (I don't think she meant me to hear the words)—'It's for father's honour'; and leaving us, went back to the schoolroom. What did she mean by that, mother? Oh, she is so strange!"

"Her mother is very poor, you know," replied Mrs. Sterling, laying up Katie's singular remark to be pondered over.

"She must be," said Flora, "for Katie's worn the same frock to school every day for three months."

Mr. Sterling, who did not let a single word of this conversation escape him, was far from feeling as comfortable under the prospect of getting back the money he had lent to Mr. Granger, as he had felt an hour before.

He understood the meaning of Katie's remark—"It's for father's honour," the truth flashing at once through his mind.

There was another period of three months, and then Mrs. Granger called again upon Mr. Sterling, and gave him twenty-five pounds more. The pale, thin face made a stronger impression on him.

It troubled him to lift the money her small fingers, in which the blue veins shone through the transparent skin, had counted out.

He wished that she had sent the money instead of calling.

It was on his lips to remark, "Don't trouble or pinch yourself to pay faster than is convenient, Mrs. Granger," but cupidity whispered that she might take too large an advantage of his considerate kindness, and so he kept silent.

"No, dear, it's for father's honour; I can't spend it."

Mr. Sterling was passing a print shop, where two children were looking in at the window, when this sentence struck upon his ears.

"An apple won't cost but a penny, Katie; and I want one so badly," answered the younger of the two children, a little girl not five years of age.

"Come away, Maggie," said the other, drawing her sister back from the window. "Don't look at them any more—don't think about them."

"But I can't help thinking about them, sister Katie," pleaded the child.

It was more than Mr. Sterling could stand. Every

want of his own children was supplied. And here was a little child pleading for an apple, which cost only a penny! but the apple was denied, because the penny must be saved to make good the dead father's honour. Who held that honour in pledge? Who took the sum total of these pennies, saved in the self-denial of little children, and added them to his already brimming coffers? A feeling of shame burned the cheeks of Mr. Sterling.

"Here, little ones!" he called, as the two children went slowly away from the fruit-shop window. He was touched with the sober look on their sweet young faces as they turned at his invitation.

"Come in, and I'll get you some apples," he said.

Katie held back, but Maggie drew on her hand, eager to accept the offer, for she was longing for the fruit.

"Come!" repeated Sterling, speaking very kindly.

The children then followed him into the shop, and he loaded them with apples and oranges. Their thankful eyes and happy faces were in his memory all day. This was his reward, and it was sweet.

Three months more, and again Mr. Sterling had a visit from the pale young widow. This time she had only twenty pounds. It was all she had been able to save, she said; but she made no excuse, and uttered no complaint. Mr. Sterling took the money and counted it over in a hesitating way. The touch thereof was pleasant to his fingers, for he loved money. But the vision of sober child-faces was before his eyes, and the sound of pleading child-voices in his ears.

Through over-taxing toil, and the denial of herself and little ones, the poor widow had gathered this small sum, and was now paying it into his hands—to make good the honourable contract of her dead husband. He hesitated, frowning in a half-absent way the edges of the little pile of sovereigns that lay under his fingers.

One thing was clear to him: he would never take anything more from the widow. The balance of the debt must be forgiven. People would get to understand the widow's case; they would hear of her self-denial and that of her children in order to pay the husband's and father's debt—in order to keep pure his honour; and they would ask, naturally, who was the exacting creditor? This thought affected him unpleasantly.

Slowly, as one in whose mind debate still went on, Mr. Sterling took from his desk a large pocket-book, and selected from one of the compartments the note on which Mrs. Granger had now made three payments. For some moments he held it in his hands, looking at the face thereof. He saw written down in clear figures, the sum, £300. Seventy of this had been paid. If he gave up, or destroyed the slip of paper, he would lose two hundred and thirty pounds. It was something of a trial for one who loved money so well, to come up squarely to this issue. Something fell in between his eyes and the note of hand. He did not see the writing and figures of the obligation, but a sad, pleading little face, and with the vision of this face came to his ears the sentence: "No, dear; it's for father's honour."

The debate in Mr. Sterling's mind was over. Taking up a pen he wrote across the face of Mr. Granger's note the word "Cancelled," and then handed it to the widow.

"What does this mean?" she asked, looking bewildered.

"It means," said Mr. Sterling, "that I hold no obligations against your husband."

Some moments went by ere Mrs. Granger's thoughts became clear enough to comprehend it all. Then she replied, as she handed back the note:

"I thank you for your generous kindness, but he left his honour in my keeping, and I must maintain it spotless."

"That you have already done," answered Mr. Sterling, speaking through emotions that were new to him. "It is white as snow!"

Then he thrust back upon her the twenty pounds she had just paid him.

"No, Mr. Sterling," the widow said.

"It shall be as I will!" was the response. "I would rather touch fire than your money. Every pound would burn upon my conscience like living coals."

"But keep this last payment," urged the widow. "I shall feel better."

"No, madam! Would you throw fire upon my conscience? Your husband's honour never had a stain. All men knew him to be pure and upright. When God took him, He assumed his earthly debts, and did not leave upon you the heavy burden of their payment. But He left with you another and most sacred obligation, which you have overlooked in part."

"What?" asked the widow, in an almost startled voice.

"To minister to the wants of your children, whom you have pinched and denied in their tender years—giving of their meat to cancel an obligation which

death hath paid. And you have made me a party in the wrong to them. Ah, madam!"—Mr. Sterling's voice softened very much—"if we could all see right at the right time, and do right at the right time, how much of wrong and suffering might be saved! I honour your true-hearted self-devotion, but I shall be no party to its continuance. As it is, I am your debtor in the sum of fifty pounds, and will repay it in my own way and time."

Mr. Sterling made good his word. Under Providence, this circumstance was the means of breaking through the hard crust of selfishness and cupidity which had formed around his heart.

He was not only generous to the widow in after years, but a doer of many deeds of kindness and humanity to which he had been in other times a stranger.

F. S. A.

SKETCH OF GARIBALDI'S CAREER.

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI was born on the 22nd of July, 1807, at Nice, in the same house, and, indeed, the same chamber, as Massena. Garibaldi's father was an honest, seafaring man, who cruised about the Mediterranean in a little craft of his own; his mother, Rosa Ragiundo, was a woman of singular intelligence and goodness.

The boy received a plain education. His father wished that he should become an advocate, a doctor, or a priest; but he had took to the water, and made the sea his playfellow. Throughout his life he has been as much sailor as soldier. At length, tiring of the schools, he sailed away in the little *Costanza* to Odessa. His second voyage was with his father to Rome.

Strong, handsome, and hardy, and endowed with a marvellous power of winning the affections of all true women, and all manly men, he had reached the age of twenty-seven when he met a Genoese exile at Marseilles. The exile was Mazzini.

Vague hopes and aspirations became definite in Garibaldi's brain under the influence of the Republican thinker. They met, they spoke of Italy, of her past greatness, of her present degradation, of her future hopes. This was in 1834; in 1849 they met again, Joseph Mazzini was triumvir of Rome, Joseph Garibaldi his trusted soldier.

The organization of "Young Italy," initiated by Mazzini, was spreading through the land, when the young sailor devoted himself heart and soul to its interests.

Entering the Piedmontese navy, Garibaldi exerted his singular influence to win fresh recruits to the good cause. An armed expedition was prepared, the leadership of which was confided to Ramorino, an officer who had shown courage and capacity in the Polish campaign. It failed miserably.

Before he knew its results, Garibaldi, feverish with impatience, left his ship, rowed ashore, and landed at Genoa. An insurrection had been arranged, but delayed. There were traitors in the camp; the Government was in possession of all the Republican plans.

The news came that Ramorino's corps, in which Mazzini served as a private soldier, had been dispersed. Garibaldi, sheltered at first by the keeper of a fruiterer's shop, disguised himself and left Genoa.

Safe from the Piedmontese police, he was arrested by the French. He escaped; passed the night in auberge; sang Béranger's "Dieu des bonnes gens;" and so won men's hearts that those whose duty it was to seize him acted as his guides instead. He reached Marseilles in safety, and there learned that the Sardinian Government had condemned him to death. "It was," he says, "the first time that I saw my name in print." Very prudently he changed it, and soon afterwards, as "Joseph Pane," he saved a boy's life by plunging into the harbour of Marseilles.

Shipping himself as mate on board a French vessel, he made another voyage to Odessa; then embarked in a frigate belonging to the Bey of Tunis, and on returning to Marseilles found that the cholera was raging in the town.

Garibaldi at once volunteered to assist in the hospitals; for fifteen days the young Italian tended the sick. He joined the brig *Nautonier*, of Nantes, Captain Beauregard, bound for Marseilles to Rio Janeiro. The wonderful scenery, the glorious luxuriance of South America, filled his soul with ecstasy. He sought for some one to share his joy; and he found the friend he needed in Rossetti.

The republic of Rio Grande was then at war with the empire of Brazil. Garibaldi received letters of marque from the Republican authorities, armed a little ship of about thirty tons, named her the *Mazzini*, and then, with Rossetti and fifteen other companions, put to sea.

After taking some prizes and narrowly escaping shipwreck, he landed, and gazed for the first time on the vast plains that stretched eastward from the

Uruguay, plains with which he soon became as familiar as a gaucho, and upon which he was to fight many a stubborn battle.

Returning to his ship, he was attacked at daybreak by two Brazilian vessels; his helmsman was killed, his craft became unmanageable, Garibaldi was shot through the neck and became unconscious, but woke to find that the enemy had been beaten off, and that his little vessel was quietly floating up the River Parana. The courage of his men, however, soon after failed them, and they deserted. Garibaldi was taken prisoner.

Released, he resumed his adventurous life, now galloping over the plains, now cruising and fighting in the long lagoons. After a fight near the Estancia de la Barra, the hero fell in love.

The courtship was a short one. Anita and Giuseppe loved at first sight. They married, and in September, 1840, their son Menotti was born.

In 1844 he entered the service of the Republic of Monte Video, then fighting for existence against Rosas. Few partisan leaders, in a land where almost every man has some of the instincts of the guerilla, were now more famous than the Italian.

Silently and gravely he was preparing himself for the mighty work that yet remained for him. The idea grew upon him that he might form an Italian Legion in South America, which, practised in warfare, might cross the sea when the good time came, and strike a blow for the Fatherland.

With three ships he fought three days against three vessels belonging to the Dictator of Buenos Ayres; the odds were too great even for Garibaldi; but so heroic was his resistance that, when he returned to Monte Video, he was hailed by the people as heartily as though he had gained a victory. The Italian Legion was formed, and with these men he gained battles. At Cerro, at La Boyada, and at San Antonio he was victorious.

There came over the sea to Garibaldi the news that Pius the Ninth was Pope, and that Italy had started from her slumber; so he sailed away towards Rome, and though timid men reminded him that in Piedmont he was still under sentence of death, he landed at Genoa.

With a wild cry of enthusiasm the people gathered round him. Modestly and humbly the great guerilla placed his sword at the service of his king. Carlo Alberto refused him.

The tide of battle, which had long been running in favour of Italy, turned, and the ebb was swift and strong. The Sardinian army withdrew before the Austrians, and left Milan to its fate. Mazzini shouldered a musket. Garibaldi hastened to Milan, raised a free corps, and marched upon Bergamo. He was compelled, however, to retire, and, after establishing himself for a time near Lago Maggiore, he crossed the frontier into Switzerland.

In September, 1848, Nice, his birthplace, sent him as its deputy to the Sardinian Parliament. 1849 arrived; Pius fled from Rome; the Republic was proclaimed. Joseph Mazzini, Aurelio Saffi and Armellini governed it as a triumvirate; and Garibaldi was entrusted with the command of the first brigade.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, then president of the French Republic, sent an army to Civita Vecchia, under General Oudinot. Many men doubted whether the Italians would fight. They soon solved the problem: they fought; they drove back the French from the walls of Rome, Garibaldi, at the Villa Pamfili, not only defeating the assailants, but taking 300 of them prisoners.

An armistice was concluded with Oudinot, but the Nizzard did not like to waste time. With 3,000 men he sallied forth from the city, and routed 5,000 Neapolitans at Palestrina. Ten days afterwards, at Velletri, he attacked the enemy, who were commanded by the king in person, and swift was the flight of his evil Majesty.

Garibaldi, who was slightly wounded in the combat, returned to Rome. The siege was drawing to its close. Republican France crushed Republican Italy. Rome surrendered.

With 4,000 foot soldiers and 4,000 horsemen, the Nizzard left the city, eager to continue a guerilla warfare in the mountains, or else to get to Venice, which, under the leadership of Daniel Manin, still held the Austrians at bay. He reached San Marino; but the little republic, threatened by the allies, compelled him to disband his troops.

With a few devoted men Garibaldi departed, and endeavoured to gain the shores of the Adriatic. On the 2nd of July he left Rome; on the 30th of the same month he quitted San Marino. His wife, Anita, who had borne him three children, and was again about to become a mother, accompanied him.

On the 3rd of August he reached Cesenatico, hired thirteen fishing-boats, and set sail for Venice. The City of the Sea was almost in sight when Garibaldi perceived that his little fleet was pursued by Austrian ships; the wind shifted, and blew dead against him;

eight of the fishing-boats were captured; with the other five he ran the gauntlet through the Austrian squadron, and landed on the coast. His little band dispersed.

With his wife, his children, Cicernacchio and his family, the Lombard officer, Livraghi, and the Barnabite monk, Ugo Bassi, Garibaldi trusted himself to the honour of the peasantry, and found them nobly faithful.

But the hardships of the fight overcame Anita. The noble woman died; and Garibaldi, digging her grave with his own hands, swore that he would yet revenge her upon the Austrians. Heart-broken, he wandered wearily away.

In time he reached Ravenna, and then passed into Tuscany, to Genoa, to Tunis; and from Tunis sailed to America. In New York he turned trader; but the old love of sea came back, and he sailed again as a merchant skipper.

He visited California and China. He came to England—a grave boar man, who sat among his bales and crates, and talked of freight and other trading matters, but whose manner had still so strange and subtle a charm that those who did not know his name walked away in wonder as to who this Italian could be. At Newcastle the north countrymen gave him a sword of honour; he has used it since to some effect.

In 1854 he returned to Italy. Gradually the republicans—the "party of action" drew nearer to the King. Garibaldi believed in Victor Emmanuel, and accepted a post in his marine. Then, establishing himself at Caprera, he rested and waited.

On New Year's Day, 1859, the Emperor, who had destroyed Rome, hinted that he would deliver Italy. The French army crossed the Alps.

At the first whisper of war Garibaldi offered his services to the King. Cavour knew his value, and accepted them. Then, with his "Huntsmen of the Alps," the hero dashed to the front, beat up the Austrian quarters, and began the war.

From Lago Maggiore to Varese, from Varese to Como, this irregular force marched before the Austrian general had inspected his troops, or seen the last orders received from Vienna; and ere he could telegraph that the "enemy had escaped him at Varese," Garibaldi had entered Como amidst the cheering of the people.

In this campaign the marvellous fertility of resources, the quickness of decision, the celerity of execution, displayed by Garibaldi, convinced all Europe that the reputation which he had won in America was not exaggerated.

Sore trials remained for him. Solferino was followed by Villafranca. When the news reached Garibaldi's camp, he bore it bravely. Cavour resigned; Garibaldi held his commission for some time longer.

A still heavier blow had to be endured. The Emperor, who had gone to war for "an idea," sent in his bill of costs. Nice and Savoy were to cease to be Italian.

At this news the great heart of the Nizzard almost failed him. That his birthplace was to be bartered away was terrible. He spoke out vehemently; he denounced the transaction as an infamy, and then waited for the spring.

In the first days of May, 1860, volunteers began to assemble in the neighbourhood of Genoa. Garibaldi himself was then at Quarto, five miles from that city.

During the night between the 5th and 6th of May, a detachment, under the orders of Nino Bixio, seized two steamboats—the *Lombardo* and the *Piemonte*—and proceeded to a rendezvous which had been appointed.

The people of Sicily had risen in insurrection; Garibaldi, the knight-errant of liberty, was going to their aid. He took his own place at the helm on board the *Piemonte*, and steered the ship himself. In all, his men numbered about a thousand, the greater part of them being Lombards.

The enterprise on which he had embarked seemed one of the most desperate ever attempted. The Piedmontese Government disowned him; by that of Naples he was denounced as a pirate and an outlaw. Steadily steering on, and keeping a keen look-out for hostile cruisers, he held his course. He touched at Talavera, on the Tuscan border, took coals at Santo Stefano, and then steered due south towards the coast of Africa.

Safe thus far, he took in provisions at Cape Bon, and then pushed right away for Sicily. On the 11th of May he made the land; a fishing boat informed him that a Neapolitan frigate and two corvettes had that morning quitted their anchorage at Marsala, and gone round towards Trapani. The harbour was free.

Garibaldi landed, and the hostile squadron, returning just too late, could only seize his deserted steamers, and open an idle fire upon the town. Next morning he and his "red shirts" were on the march. On the 15th they met the enemy at Calatafimi, and beat him;

on the 26th, driving the Neapolitans before him, he occupied Palermo. In due time all Sicily acknowledged him as Dictator.

Early in August he crossed from Messina to the mainland. At the mere whisper of his name regiments dispersed; and Bombalino ran as swiftly from Naples as his father had fled from Velletri.

Then, when he had conquered two kingdoms, Garibaldi laid the gift at the feet of Victor Emmanuel, and went back, a poor man, to grow turnips at Caprera. In all history there is not a more wonderful or glorious episode.

Again he left Caprera, on a sad journey. With the cry of "Rome or death," he called his friends around him. Mad as the undertaking seemed, there were many who, remembering what he had already done, believed that success might yet be possible. The suspense was short. He fell at Aspromonte; and it was an Italian hand that shot him down. A long and weary illness followed; the recovery of the general was a slow process, and not completed when he decided on leaving his island home at Caprera to pay a visit to England.

We need not discuss the question as to the motive which impelled Garibaldi to come amongst us once more, and at so peculiar a juncture of European politics. It is enough to mention that we have, as a nation, known how to do him fitting honour, as the personation of heroic deeds and lofty patriotism; and that the reception accorded to him on his entry into London was worthy of him, and of the first as well as the freest city in the world.

SCIENCE.

A PUZZLE FOR BURGLARS.—A burglar-proof vault has been invented, in which a space between two of the plates is filled with iron balls about one inch in diameter, perfectly loose. The plates cannot be drilled through, as a drill must strike one of those balls, which would rotate with the tool, instead of submitting to the perforating process.

CAUSE AND PREVENTION OF "INTERFERING" OF HORSES' FEET.—The cause of "interfering" is not owing to the slipping of horses, as many suppose, for all horses slip more or less, but it is due to travelling with their feet too close together. To prevent it, make the inner half, or halves, of the shoe, or shoes, one-eighth of an inch thicker than the outer half or halves, and set them even with the face of the hoof. They will travel, then, far enough apart not to cut themselves when they slip. This subject is one of great interest to all keepers and owners of horses, and in regard to which there is a wide difference of opinion. Some horses "interfere" in spite of all the skill of the shoe, thus showing that it must result from some infirmity in the animal.

THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH.

At a recent meeting of the Atlantic Telegraph Company, the Right Hon. Stuart Wortley (the chairman), after referring to the previous meeting, which had been adjourned for a statement of the details of the contract, said: Since that period the negotiations had been completed, and he had now to state the substance of what had been agreed upon, adding that he hoped in 18 months they would meet to celebrate the establishment of a telegraph which would be immortal to its fame.

The contract was with the house of Glass and Elliot, who had the largest share in the successful laying of deep-sea cables, and had shown a disposition to treat the company with fairness and liberality. The cable selected by Messrs. Glass and Elliot was heavier than expected, but the expense thus added was compensated by strength and all the qualities required for a deep-sea cable.

The price to be paid for the cable stretching from Europe to America was £700,000; the paid-up capital amounted to only £316,000, and the difference was to be chiefly paid up to the contractors by taking shares and debentures for the amount. Payment was to be made as the work proceeded, being checked by the returns of the actual expenditure.

The directors confidently anticipated—and he believed the general public who were well informed concurred in the expectation—that if the cable should be successfully laid they would then be in a position to earn very large and almost unparalleled profits; and in that event a bonus would be given to the contractors of £137,000, or about 20 per cent. of the capital, in old unguaranteed shares, such shares not to be delivered on a transient success, but from time to time, as the result of the cable continuing in perfect working order.

As regarded the mode in which the money was to be supplied, he observed, that in the first place it was proposed to increase the capital (£316,000), to be raised by the issue of 8 per cent. guaranteed shares to that amount. In guaranteed shares the company

would pay Messrs. Glass and Elliot £250,000 and £100,000 in debentures. Thus the price of the cable would be made up, and, as he before stated, if the cable should prove perfectly successful, the contractors would receive £137,000 more in unguaranteed shares.

In conclusion, he stated that the contract had been signed by the legal representatives of both parties, and now only awaited formal execution; and expressed his entire confidence in the success of the undertaking.

The chairman concluded by moving the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted: "That this meeting, having heard the chairman's explanation of the contract entered into by the board with Messrs. Glass, Elliot, and Co., for the manufacture and laying of this company's cable, hereby signifies its approval of the same."

Other resolutions were also passed authorising the directors to raise the necessary capital in the manner described by the chairman.

THE GREAT EASTERN AND THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

The steamship Great Eastern has been taken up by Messrs. Glass, Elliot, and Co., the contractors for the Atlantic cable, for the purpose of laying it between England and America. The Great Eastern will be handed over to the contractors on the 1st of May, who from that date pay all the expenses of the steamer, including wages, victualling, insurance, &c.; and when the cable is laid the proprietors of the Great Eastern are to receive £50,000 in paid-up shares of the Atlantic Telegraph Company. Although Messrs. Glass, Elliot, and Co. take possession of the steamer on the 1st of May, it is not their intention to lay the cable across the Atlantic till next spring; and should anything interfere with their fulfilling their engagements then, the proprietors of the steamer will receive a further remuneration, without interfering with the original agreement, as given above. The arrangement, it is to be hoped, will prove a profitable one for all parties; and the public, we are sure, will wish the Great Eastern every success in the undertaking.

PETROLEUM.—The Michigan petroleum, lately discovered, has been analyzed, and found to be of a very superior quality. It has less odour than the crude Pennsylvania oils, and will yield 20 per cent. more of the refined article than the former. Its specific gravity is 40 deg. That of Pennsylvania oil ranges from 45 deg. to 47 deg. Albion petroleum is easily deodorized, and, when refined, makes a clear white oil that burns freely, and is entirely non-explosive. It yields but little naphtha, and stands a fire test of 140 deg.

TRIALS OF THE ARMSTRONG AND WHITWORTH GUNS.

The course of experiments arranged by the special committee appointed to examine into the merits and defects of the two rival systems of artillery has been resumed after more than one postponement. Judging from the high reputation of the members of the committee, it is more than probable that the important questions which have so long occupied public attention will at last meet with a satisfactory solution.

So much has been urged on both sides that the only course remaining open to the Government was a resort to a competitive trial between Mr. Whitworth and Sir W. Armstrong. This has been done, after due notice, enabling those accomplished scientific artillerymen to produce the best guns they could upon which to stake the merits of their respective weapons.

That both have made improvements is admitted. Sir W. Armstrong has been enabled to use steel for the principal part of his guns, by finding that metal could be produced of the right standard of excellence. Mr. Whitworth always upheld steel of the proper kind, but had not till now been satisfied with the quality of the metal, and the means of working it under the hammer in the large masses required.

This important difference in material between the two kinds of guns remains, however, that the Armstrong guns are strengthened by coils of iron shrunk on in layers upon the steel tube where it is required to resist the force of the explosion, while the Whitworth gun is made entirely of homogeneous steel, the rings of metal being forced on in a state of tension by hydraulic pressure, these strengthening portions not being coiled, but cast and hammered. Therefore, two very different methods of constructing the material of a gun are under trial.

Then we have the systems of rifling, which are also exceedingly diverse. The Armstrong system requires a lead-coated shot or shell, to be forced through a polygroove bore from the breech, while the Whitworth system employs iron or steel projectiles, shaped to fit a polygonal bore so nearly as to leave only a very small space for windage, and loads from the muzzle.

Mr. Whitworth has, we believe, given up all idea of producing a breech-loading gun, and does not compete in this trial with the breech-loading piece he once invented. But Sir William Armstrong now

competes with his shunt guns in addition to the regular Armstrong gun of the service, and these are muzzle-loaders, firing iron and steel projectiles with studs upon them, which work in grooves of the bore.

These guns are by no means a novelty now, for they have been repeatedly tried at Shoeburyness, and generally, if not always, with superior success to the Armstrong gun. The 600-pounder is a gun rifled on the same principle, very closely resembling that adopted by the French artillery and several other services.

Some improvements have been made in the Armstrong gun of the service, the object of which is to prevent the vent-piece blowing out. These consist in a projecting face on the rear surface of the vent-piece which keys it into the breech opening, and two brass marks, one on the breech screw, the other on the gun, by which the artilleryman can see or feel when the screw is sent home.

A handle has also been added to the vent-piece, which the field guns did not possess before, when the gunners often found it too hot to handle.

The special committee have drawn up a most extensive programme, determined evidently to prove the weak as well as the strong points in the two systems.

The trials will, in all probability, last some months as a consequence.

The guns to be tried are 12-pounder field-pieces or 3-in. guns, and a 70-pounder or 5-in. gun. The field-pieces are the service Armstrong, the shunt-gun of Sir W. Armstrong, and the 12-pounder muzzle-loader of Mr. Whitworth.

TO PREVENT PLASTER OF PARIS SETTING.—Many persons complain of plaster of Paris setting too soon to enable them to take the mould of a fish. The following receipt will answer their purpose:—"To prevent plaster of Paris setting for three or four hours, as well as increasing its stone-like appearance and density, 2 per cent. of alum, sulphate of potash, or borax."

THE BEST LIME FOR THE CALCIUM LIGHT.—Having had occasion to use the oxy-hydrogen or Drummond light, I was much annoyed by the breaking of the lime cylinders. Having tried various substitutes, I find that lime made from Italian marble is the most satisfactory. It does not crack, gives a good light, and is easily prepared. Small pieces of white marble are put into a clear fire, in a stove or open grate. After remaining at a red heat for twenty or thirty minutes, it is, after cooling, easily cut into any desired shape.—K.

SUGAR-MAKING FROM SORGHUM OR IMPHEE.—Messrs. C. O. West and Co., of Martinsville, Ohio, say:—"There have been several samples of sugar produced by different individuals in this vicinity, on a very cheap and simple plan, viz.:—Take the most thorough granulated syrup on hand, and place on a strong linen cloth, suspended by the corners at a slight swag. Prepare a vessel underneath to catch the drips; then introduce pure cold water in falling drops on the grained syrup in the cloth, stirring at the same time thoroughly, so as to cause the water to come in contact with every particle of grain. Continue the process of washing in this way until the waxy, or gummy, tendency is destroyed considerably; then apply a press to hasten the expulsion of the liquid part, leaving the grain in the cloth, which may be put into a vessel, and will soon dry and crumble ready for market by stirring."

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION.—Captain J. H. Selwyn, R.N., read a paper recently "On the Policy of Future Naval Construction." He remarked that the position of England required her to possess a navy not fitted for one purpose only, but able to discharge nearly every conceivable duty that could be expected from a ship, and argued that the vessels of that fleet must be both numerous and of various class. A fleet of iron-clads alone would not protect our mercantile navy or our out-ports. He then pointed out the fallacy of endeavouring to assimilate too much the internal arrangements of our new iron fleet to the conventional requirements of the wooden vessels which they supersede—instancing the use which we make of casks instead of availing ourselves of the cells with which the structure of iron vessels almost necessarily provides us. Then passing in review various suggestions relating to questions of detail, such as the use of twin screws, the means of preventing fouling and oxidation, and the use of steel in place of iron, he forcibly pointed out the necessity of having a large fleet of ships of moderate tonnage, but combining great speed and handiness with considerable power of attack, protected to some extent, but not at the cost of their other qualities.

A NEW CAPITAL WANTED FOR INDIA.—The latest Indian despatches announce that Sir John Lawrence has started for Simla with his council, that the Impe-

rial Government is not again to return to Calcutta; and that that city will be made the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief. That statement is precisely equivalent to this, that the President and Congress of the United States are gone to the Rocky Mountains, that they will never return to the north, but that General Grant's head-quarters will be for the future in New York. We presume the truth to be that Sir John Lawrence, whose health is not good, has gone to Simla, that part of his council accompanies him—a very useless expense—and that both will remain absent till the railway is open to the foot of Darjeeling, or Sir Charles Wood has fixed on the site of a new capital. As for military head-quarters, they had better be in England than Calcutta.

FACETIÆ.

ILL-MADE fortunes, like ill-made candles are apt to smother their own splendour with their own grease.

SEVERAL young European diplomatists have gone crazy from attempts to comprehend the Schleswig-Holstein trouble.

A WAG, passing by a house which had been almost consumed by fire, inquired whose it was. Being told that it was a hatter's, "Ah!" said he, "then the loss will be felt."

LOVE.—A matter-of-fact philosopher asserts that "Love is to domestic life what butter is to bread—it possesses little nourishment in itself, but gives substantial a grand relish, without which they would be hard to swallow."

"JOHN," said a father to his son one day, when he caught him shaving his down off his upper lip, "don't throw your shaving water out where there are any barefooted boys, for they might get their feet pricked."

"HENRY, love, I wish you would throw away that book and talk to me, I feel so dull." (A long silence, and no reply.) "Oh, Henry, my foot's asleep!" "Is it? Well, don't talk, dear, you might wake it."

A CERTAIN Scotch friend of ours, who is not a member of the temperance society, being asked by a dealer to purchase some fine old Jamaica rum, drily answered, "To tell you the truth, sir, I canna say I'm very fond of rum; for if I tak mair than sax tumblers, it's very apt to give a body the headache!"

PHILANTHROPIST.

"GEORGE, what does your father do for a living?"

"He's a philanthropist, sir!"

"A what?"

"A philanthropist, sir! He collects money for Central Africa, and builds houses out of the proceeds."

TASTES DIFFER.—Augustus Fitz Poodle: "Aw! Do you not dance this evening? Some splendid queeters here, who are so fond of dancing with me!" Romeo Jones: "No! I only come for the supper; and I wish they would hurry it up! I have a tremendous appetite, without the exercise of dancing!"

A SOLEMN SUBJECT.—"Jennie," said a venerable Cameronian to his daughter who was asking his consent to accompany her urgent and favoured suitor to the altar: "Jennie, it is a very solemn thing to get married." "I know it," replied the sensible damsel, "but it's a heap solemnier not to."

A WELL-PRIMED lover of the bottle, who had lost his way, reeled into a temperance hotel, and hiccupped, "Mr. —, do you keep—a—anything—good to take—here?" "Yes," replied the temperance hotel-keeper, "we have excellent cold water—the best thing you can have." "Well, I know it," was the reply; "there's no one thing that's done so much for navigation as that."

MEINHERR VON DUNCK attended at court in New York to get excused from the jury-box. "I can't unshand goot Engless," quoth Meinher. "What did he say?" asked the judge. "I can't unshand goot Engless," repeated the Dutchman. "Take your seat," cried the judge, "take your seat. That's no excuse; you need not be alarmed, as you are not likely to hear any."

THE DEACON CORNERED.—This winter is generally acknowledged to be a cold winter, but the coolness of the season is nothing to the coolness of a deacon who resides not a hundred miles from London. Said deacon was a zealous advocate for total abstinence. Not long since he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlour, and in repairing a corner near the fireplace it was found necessary to remove the wainscot, when, lo! a "mare's nest" was brought to light, which astonished the workmen most marvellously—a brace of decanters, sundry junk bottles, all containing "something to take," a pitcher and tumblers, coolly reposing there in snug quarters. The joiner, with wonder-stricken countenance, ran to the proprietor with the intelligence. "Well, I de-

clare!" exclaimed the deacon, "that is curious, sure enough. It must be that old B. left these things there when he occupied the premises thirty years since." "Perhaps he did," returned the discoverer, "but, deacon, that ice in the pitcher must have been well frozen to have remained solid so long a time!" The deacon, being fairly cornered, handed the carpenter a shilling.

WHY is love like an Irish poplin? Because it is three parts stuff.

STUPIDITY.—Said a testy barrister—"I believe the jury have been inoculated for stupidity." "That may be," replied his opponent; "but the bar and the court are of opinion that you had it in the natural way."

A TEXTOTAL orator assured his hearers at Nottingham, on Good Friday, that he held hotel keepers and publicans in such extreme detestation that for a hundred pounds he would not shake the hand of one of them.

AT the bottom of an order for a lot of goods lately received by a firm in Liverpool from a Dublin house was the truly Irish *nota bene*:—"Send the whole at once and the remainder afterwards."

ONE of our religious contemporaries, this week, says: "A friend of ours who met General Butler on a railroad train a few days ago, said to him, 'General, the best way to relieve our prisoners is by taking Richmond; and if you do it, you will be the next President.' 'Well,' replied the General instantly, 'that would be a very great work for very small pay.'"

A SEXTON in Lancashire was lately asked how trade was with him. He replied that it was "Varra bad—nowt doin' hardly." "Well, how's that?" asked the other. "Well, these seas," answered the sexton, "poverty seldom does. There's far more kilt wi' o'er-bettin' and o'er-drinkin', nor there is wi' being pinched."

THE first Lord Eldon, in one of his shooting excursions at Wreham, came across a person who was sporting on his land without leave. His lordship inquired if the stranger was aware he was trespassing, and if he knew to whom the estate belonged? "What's that to you?" was the reply; "I suppose you are one of old Baggs' keepers." "No," replied the peer, "your supposition is wrong, my friend, I am old Baggs himself."

ROYAL RETORT TO A FEMALE VOCALIST.—George the Second, who, it is well-known, had very little taste for either poetry, painting, or music, being present at a concert, to no one part of which he paid the least attention, condescended to compliment a woman of quality on the excellence of her vocal powers; upon which the lady, who was one of the finest private female singers then living, courted to his Majesty with a sarcastic formality, saying: "My performance, sire, would have been better, could I have flattered myself that it was worthy a moment of your Majesty's attention." "Nay, madam," retorted the king, "your voice only requires to be equal to your wit to command the attention of St. Cecilia herself."

WOULDN'T GO OFF.—An absurd effect was produced one night lately at a Marseilles theatre, where they were playing the "Huguenots." When the soldiers tried to fire on Marcel, Valentine and Raoul, in the last act, it was found that the powder had not been put into their muskets; naturally, the caps alone exploded; but this did not prevent Valentine and Raoul from falling down dead, amidst the roars of the audience. Marcel, an older soldier, stood up like a man, till a scene-shifter took a shot at him from the slips, when he fell over the bodies of his prematurely deceased friends, and the curtain fell upon the group.

A GENTLEMAN from the country, stopping at one of our hotels the other day, entered into conversation with one of the travellers, asking him questions about the fair, &c. After a few minutes' conversation, the traveller drew out his cigar-case, saying, "Will you take a cigar, sir?" "Wal, I don't mind if I do," was the reply. The cigar was passed to him, and also the one which our traveller was smoking, for the purpose of giving him a light. He carefully placed the cigar first handed him into his pocket, and took his knife and cut off that end of the lighted one which had been in the mouth of his generous friend, and commenced smoking the remainder, saying, "It ain't often that a man from the country runs afoot of as clever a fellow in the city as you!"

BON REPOS.—A vulgar man unexpectedly succeeded to a fortune. His riches procured him attentions and invitations to the houses of persons of rank. He dined one day at a gentleman's house, when, after a good quantity of wine had been drunk, and the company proposed going away, the host drank "Bon repos" (a good night's rest). This new toast the man of money treasured carefully in his mind, and soon having a large party to dine with him, after "The Queen," he gave "Bon repos." To his astonishment, the company rose, and left the house. The cause of

their sudden departure being afterwards explained to him by one of them, he said, "I really thought 'Bon repos' was a French general."

A SUGGESTION THAT COMES A LITTLE TOO LATE.—The infant prince has been vaccinated at Marlborough House. We cannot help thinking that it would have been a step in the right direction to have taken the royal baby to Osborne, and there to have drawn the vaccine matter direct from Cowes.—*Punch*.

UNCONSCIOUS RETORT.

SCENE.—An Anglo-Franco Restaurant in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square.

French Lady (calling): "Garçon!"

English Lady (trying to speak pure French, but with very indifferent success): "Gasson!"

English Waiter (innocently): "On, ma'am? Oh, yes, it's on to the full, ma'am."

[General bewilderment of all nations. —*Punch*.]

TRUST not the amiability of the cabman, for his (s)miles are but short.—*Mr. Merryman*.

WHAT relation is the throne to the Prince of Wales? A stopfather.—*Mr. Merryman*.

SERVANTALISM.—Irish Girl (trying for a situation): "Shure, I don't mind the work, ma'am, iv I can get out on a Sunday. Because if I stop in all the week, I gets the consumption."—*Mr. Merryman*.

WHY is a cabman the most discontented and ambitious of men?—Because he is never satisfied with his rank and is always looking out for a hire.—*Comic News*.

BUDGET AND MUM.—Mrs. Brown, on hearing Brown read out a paragraph, headed "The Forthcoming Budget," exclaimed, "The Fourth Coming Budget, indeed, the five hundredth you means, Brown."—*Comic News*.

DENDREARY'S LAST.—The illustrious nobleman, who has reached the four hundred and fifty somethingth night of his age, wants to know why a fat man turns wicked directly he takes up the Banting regimen? His lordship says, with his touching smile,—"He, he,—becawthe he b-becometh a-thinner!"—*Comic News*.

WHY is a journey by railway like a street-row? Because it is a low commotion (locomotion).—*Fun*.

MOST LIKELY.—Calcraft, we hear, is fond of keeping canaries. We should say that he most likely feeds them on hemp-seed.—*Fun*.

CASUAL CONVERSATIONS.

Picked up by our own Mouchard.

Smith: "Have you heard the news? The Tories are dissatisfied with their D'Israeliish leader in the Commons, and are going to try General Peel."

Brown: "What, my loud-speaking ex-minister of war? 'Quem Deus vult perdere, &c.' and so on."

Smith: "In this case, explain the application of the sentence."

Brown: "Explain! Bless me! Don't you see they are throwing away the fruit, and the Tory tree is not very fertile, and taking up with the bark or Peel."

Brown: "I have a first-rate idea for the Government on the convict question."

Smith: "And it is—"

Brown: "This. No one knows what to do with our convicted children. One country declines to receive them, and another won't have them. The policeman knocks them down, and the law takes them up, when following their vocation. Well, I propose, in order to get rid of them, and also not to prevent their getting a livelihood, to let them steal—out of the country!"—*Fun*.

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN WERE BETTER FOR BOTH

SCENE.—An English Court of Justice.

The Law. Prisoner, don't plead guilty! How do you know whether a case can be made out against you?

Prisoner. Thank you, my lord; but as I did it —

The Law. Be silent, my good man! How do you know you did it—did what your offence is said to be?

Witness. My lord, he did take —

The Law. Be very careful, sir! Remember your oath! How do you know that it was this man?

Witness. I have known him, I should think, for —

The Law. Never mind what you think! Did you see him take the thing?

Witness. I was walking —

The Law. Who asked whether you were walking, or riding, or flying, or crawling? Answer the question. Did you see him?

Witness. Yes, my lord.

The Law. Was it at night or in the day?

Witness. At night.

The Law. Can you see in the dark?

Witness. There was a moon, my lord.

The Law. Of course there was; but did it shine?

Witness. Very brightly.

The Law. You can swear that it was he, and no one else?

Witness. Yes, my lord.

The Law. Do you know that he has a brother very like him?

Witness. It wasn't his brother, my lord.

The Law. Answer the question, or you'll get into trouble. Do you know the fact that his brother is very like him?

Witness. He is not so very like, my lord.

The Law. How dare you say that? It is only your opinion. Will you swear that there was light enough to enable you to be certain that this was the man?

Witness. I know the fellow well enough, my lord.

The Law. How dare you call him names! You dislike him, evidently, and the jury will be cautious in accepting your evidence. Be careful, sir!

Prisoner. He tells the truth, my lord. I did—

The Law. Hold your tongue, my poor man.

Prisoner. But it is true that I took—

The Law. Keep him down, gaoler. Go down, you sir, and feel ashamed of having shown animosity in that sacred box. Gentlemen of the jury, such charges are easily made, but disproved with difficulty. The witness had evidently an animus. The prisoner has borne a good character, at least, nothing has been proved against him, and his readiness to admit everything is creditable to him. Still, it is for you to say, guilty or not guilty.

Jury. Guilty, my lord!

The Law. As the jury has found you guilty of stealing these sovereigns, prisoner, I have only to pass sentence, which I shall make very light. You will be imprisoned, without hard labour, for a month.

Prisoner. I can do that on my head, my lord.

[*Flings his nailed shoe at the foreman, and exit shouting.*
SCENE.—A French Court of Justice.

The Law. Prisoner, I am afraid you are an awful scoundrel! Why don't you confess, and make reparation to society?

Prisoner. Because I am innocent.

The Law. You say that with a certain impudence which proves you hardened in crime. How came you to rob your master?

Prisoner. I never did.

The Law. This reiteration of a plea which is clearly false is disrespectful to the court, and will aggravate your punishment. Are you fond of the theatre?

Prisoner. Yes.

The Law. That denotes a love of pleasure which is frequently found united with dishonesty. Do you smoke?

Prisoner. A good deal.

The Law. Doubtless, to stupefy the reproaches of a menacing conscience. Do you go to mass?

Prisoner. At regular times.

The Law. That shows you to be a hypocrite. Now, witness, is he not guilty?

Witness. No, my lord.

The Law. How dare you say that? Did you commit the crime yourself?

Witness. Certainly not.

The Law. Don't answer in that petulant way. What is your character? Are you fond of the theatre?

Witness. No.

The Law. Just so. A dark and gloomy nature cannot enjoy innocent recreation. Do you smoke?

Witness. Very little.

The Law. You fear to be traced by the smell of your clothes. You know that tobacco increases our revenue, and you willfully abstain in order to injure your country. Do you go to mass?

Witness. Seldom.

The Law. You feel your evil character unfits you for the solemnities of the Church. Go down. The next. Now, what have you to say, woman?

Witness. The accused is an excellent husband—

The Law. Are you his wife?

Witness. No, my lord, but his wife's friend, and I know—

The Law. Then the less you have to say in future to the wife of an accused person the better. Perhaps you are in love with him.

Witness. My lord, I have a husband whom I love, and children whom I adore, and because any of them might be charged falsely, as the prisoner is, I came to say what I can for justice.

The Law. That theatrical sentiment you have learned from some play, and your reciting it here is most indecent. Go down! Gentlemen of the jury,—It is quite clear that this scoundrel is guilty! His insolent denials, the class of witnesses, atheists, profligates, frequenters of theatres, gloomy conspirators, and the like, make his guilt evident; besides which a gaoler heard him say *Mon Dieu* in sleep, which showed temporary remorse. Finally, I happen to know that he is guilty, for I knew his father in his youth, and he was a vile assassin. Gentlemen, you have only to say guilty!

The Jury. Not guilty.

The Law. You are a contumacious set of rebellious and illogical pigs, and I shall see whether the procurator of his Majesty cannot deal with you as conspirators. Meanwhile, abandon the box you have disgraced.

[*Exeunt the jurymen, confirmed in Imperialism.*
—Punch.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

EXTRACTION OF ESSENTIAL OILS.—T. B. Graves' method of extracting wintergreen, peppermint, and other essential oils, is to mix with a watery solution of the essential oil some olive oil, and to make a soapy emulsion by the addition of potash. The soap is then to be decomposed by the addition of acid, when the olive oil will rise to the surface, bringing with it the essential oil, which may be separated by agitation with rectified spirits.

The lovers of artichokes in France have discovered the means of raising that vegetable of an enormous size. It is a very simple process—namely, to make a deep incision in the stalk when the plant is about the size of an egg; and the whole leaf may be made to partake of the same qualities that now only the tips possess, by covering them with a black stuff not of too great thickness. This is information worth having for the gastronome.

A NEW GRAFTING WAX.—One pound of resin, five ounces of 95 per cent. alcohol, one ounce of beef tallow, one tablespoon of spirits of turpentine. Melt the resin over a slow fire, add the beef tallow, and stir with a perfectly dry stick or piece of wire. When somewhat cooled, add the turpentine, and last, the alcohol in small quantities, stirring the mass constantly. Should the alcohol cause it to lump, warm again until it melts. Keep in a bottle. Lay it on in a very thin coat with a brush. In a room of moderate temperature, the wax should be of the consistence of molasses. Should it prove thicker, thin it down with alcohol. It is always ready for use, is never affected by heat or cold, and heals up wounds hermetically.

TO A FRIEND IN AUSTRALIA.

BY L. A. HORSFIELD.

We think of thee, when smiling Spring
Adorns the earth with flowers;
And when the Summer-days forth fling
Bright sunshine o'er the bowers.

We think of thee, when Autumn weaves
Her robe of golden hues,
And ripen'd fruits and wither'd leaves
Around our pathway strew.

We think of thee, when Winter reigns
With desolating away,
And holds the dreary earth in chains
And daylight fades away.

Though thou a wanderer dost roam
'Neath Austral skies so fair;
Yet thou hast still an English home,
And those that love thee there.

Warm hearts throb faster at thy name,
And tears unbidden start;
And looks, far more than words, proclaim
How very dear thou art.

With yearning hearts they long for thee
To bless thy home again;
And from that home no more to be
A wanderer o'er the main.

May He, who heard and answer'd thee,
And on thy pathway smiled,
When thou, a lost one, bent'st thy knee
On that Australian wild—

With tender care o'erhead—w thee
Beneath his mighty wing,
And safely o'er the roaring sea
The bark that bears thee bring.

May prosperous breezes fill the sail,
That o'er the ocean's foam
Shall waft thee to the lovely vale,
Where smiles thy English home.

GEMS.

No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich or poor, according to what he is, not according to what he has.

The greatest charm of books, is, perhaps, that we see in them that other men have suffered what we have. Some souls we ever find who could have responded to our agony, be it what it may. This, at least, robs misery of its loneliness.

As we ascend in society, like those who climb a mountain, we shall find that the line of perpetual con-

gelation commences with the higher circles, and the nearer we approach to the grand luminary the court, the more frigidity and apathy we shall experience.

If you have performed an act of great and disinterested virtue, conceal it; if you publish it, you will neither be believed here nor rewarded hereafter.

The noblest independence is the government of our passions, and the most sublime dependence is on the Divine Providence.

STATISTICS.

FEW people comprehend the great amount of sugar used annually in the United States. In 1862 there were 432,411 tons, or 864,822,000 pounds, or nearly twenty-nine pounds to each man, woman, and child, estimating the population at 30,000,000.

THE WAY THE MONEY GOES.—A parliamentary return of the gold and silver imported into and exported from each presidency of India states that, in the year 1863, the gold and silver imported exceeded the export by no less than 19,367,764. In the last eight years this excess of import over export in India has reached the enormous value of 109,652,917. Bullion has been coined in India in the present century to an amount considerably exceeding 200,000,000.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.—A statement of this year's estimates for public works and buildings was issued yesterday. The sum required is 857,518*l.*, which is a decrease, as compared with last year, by 102,605*l.* In the item for harbours of refuge, there is a decrease of 69,000*l.* for lighthouses abroad of 18,211*l.* for public buildings (Ireland) of 17,156*l.* for New Houses of Parliament of 14,300*l.* for land, &c., at Kensington Gore of 14,000*l.* for Probate Court registries of 12,426*l.* for Holyhead and Port Patrick harbours of 10,464*l.* for public buildings of 10,220*l.* for New Westminster Bridge of 8,427*l.* for British Embassy houses, Paris and Madrid, of 3,412*l.* for General Register House, Edinburgh, of 2,153*l.* for Nelson Column of 2,000*l.* On the other hand, the vote for the Royal Palaces is increased by 7,015*l.*; the new Foreign-office buildings by 35,000*l.*; the Sheriff Court-houses, Scotland, by 11,000*l.*; the Westminster Bridge approaches, 8,000*l.*; the new Record Buildings, Dublin, 8,000*l.*; the Public Record Repository, 6,000*l.*; the Consulate and Embassy Houses Constantinople, 2,453*l.* There is also a new vote of 4,000*l.* for the Isle of Man Lunatic Asylum, and of 3,260*l.* for "architectural designs." The general decrease, however, is, as we have stated, 102,605*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

A VERY magnificent mansion is about to be built in Paris by Baron Rothschild. It will cost nearly four millions of francs.

THE yacht of Prince Napoleon lying at Marseilles is advertised for sale. It is clear that the prince of late has less taste than of yore for the briuy.

CARDINAL WISEMAN has very courteously agreed to deliver an oration on Shakespeare early in June, for the benefit of the Monument Fund.

It was stated in a case heard in Norfolk last week that the defendant had at different times paid £200 for poaching.

A LANDSLIP took place a few days since near Weymouth, by which about seven acres of land fell into the sea.

COST OF THE ROYAL MARRIAGE.—The expenses attending the marriage of the Prince of Wales, it appears from recent returns, amount to £24,855.

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—We rejoice to learn that the report of the untimely end of Dr. Livingstone is unfounded. Late mails from the Cape of Good Hope report that he is well, and expected shortly to arrive at Cape Town.

THE CHANNEL SQUADRON.—The Channel Squadron is ordered to be held in readiness for instant service, and the victualling and storing the ships has just been completed. The squadron has been joined by the Hector, iron-clad.

THE IONIAN ISLANDS.—The inhabitants of Corfu are already beginning to express their regret at the departure of the British troops. It is calculated that for the maintenance of the garrison, independent of visitors, at least £200,000 was annually expended in the islands.

RAILWAYS IN THE METROPOLIS.—The property required for the Great Eastern Railway City station consists of 111 houses in the parish of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, displacing 333 persons; 60 houses in Christ Church, Spitalfields, and 180 persons; and 186 houses in St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, and 556 persons.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HARRIET S.—See the reply to "Minnie Grey" in present number.

E. T. W.—No; foppery is never cured—once a coxcomb, always a coxcomb.

ELIZA C.—A lady who is 5 ft. 6 in. in height is rather above the average height of women; but cannot be, strictly speaking, considered tall.

EDITH.—Wait and watch: there is no disguise which can long conceal love where it does exist, or which can conceal the truth where it does not.

T. R. FULLER.—Of what use are ceremonies and forms, seeing that at times they are empty? Of what use, we ask in turn, are barrels, which at times are empty, too?

W. GREVILLE.—The circumstance is not at all uncommon; but we are often governed by people not only weaker than ourselves, but even by those whom we think so.

BUTLER COLETON.—A man cannot possess anything that is better than a good woman, nor anything that is worse than a bad one.

J. A.—The lines on "Civil War" are excellent in spirit and show some poetic ability; but we regret that we cannot avail ourselves of them.

IND.—The publisher will forward you (post-free) No. 36 of THE LONDON READER, on receipt of two stamps. The index to the 7 DAYS JOURNAL is not yet published.

CARLA need not be distressed—she will in all probability grow two inches more. The handwriting would become good with more practice; and the colour of the hair is bright auburn.

TOM P.—We regret that we cannot avail ourselves of your poetical favours; which are declined with thanks. Our arrangements as regards original prose contributions are complete at present.

FLORA. Melvior desires to meet with a gentleman matrimonially inclined. She is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair complexion, blue eyes, light (naturally) wavy hair; ladylike, accomplished, and thoroughly domesticated.

ROMEO, who is tall, nineteen years of age, and having brown hair and blue eyes, wishes to correspond, either matrimonially or platonically, with any good-looking young lady, who may be similarly disposed.

HERBERT, who is nineteen years of age, tall, with dark complexion and black eyebrows, desires to open a matrimonial correspondence, and exchange *cartes-de-visite*, with a young lady who is musical, as he is a good pianist himself.

A. L.—All tatters delight in getting hold of anything akin to a love story; not merely from a fondness for scandal, but because the most powerful and pleasurable of human feelings is in some measure awakened and excited thereby.

E. L. A.—We are not aware whether it is intended that excursion steamers shall run from London to Copenhagen at Whitstable. Should such be the case, the advertisement columns of the morning papers will no doubt give you every information in due time.

S. T. C.—By no means; wrong never comes right, and there is nothing more certain than that improper means will always defeat good ends. You will observe that we reply to you in a guarded manner, which you will doubtless understand.

R. B. S.—We hardly know whether to smile at your whimsical note, or pity your position. Did you forget that—

Maidens, like moths, are caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where Merit must despair?

HELEN LINDSAY.—To disperse freckles, take one ounce of lemon-juice, a quarter of a drachm of powdered borax, and half a drachm of sugar. Mix and keep standing in a glass bottle till the liquor is fit for use, which it will be in a few days. Then rub it on the hands and face occasionally.

FANNY C. R.—There is no impropriety in a lady requesting a gentleman, who is an intimate friend, to give her his *carte-de-visite*; though such a request would, of course, take a certain colouring from the respective ages of the parties, and the kind of friendship that exists between them.

BERNARD W. desires to correspond with a young English lady with a view to matrimony; he is 5 ft. 7 in. in height, twenty-two years of age, of gentlemanly appearance; has dark brown hair, moustache, &c., and dark eyes; holds a respectable position, and has very good prospects. RICHARD LAMBER.—You forget that "there is nothing new under the sun." That among the Romans there were some, especially ladies, who were false hair, there is abundant evidence in the works of several of their poets; and it also appears, from an epigram of Martial (and probably from passages in other writers) that false teeth were not unknown, although it seems that they had not arrived at the art of supplying the loss of an eye.

MARY F.—The meaning of the word score, as used in a musical sense, is a complete and orderly assemblage (in manuscript or print) of the parts of a vocal or instrumental composition. This is called a score on account of the vertical lines (or staves) which run from the upper to the lower staff, symmetrically dividing the different parts; that is, bringing their corresponding bars directly under each other, so that the eye sees at a glance their harmonical connection, and the judgment is enabled to decide upon the effect. On the sentiment the words "partidon," "partitur," "partitura,"

and "partitions," are used for our score. The term partition to designate a score has recently been revived in England, and perhaps, when we consider the nine different meanings of the latter, as given by Johnson, it is the more expressive word of the two.

A. R. STEELE.—You may consider your case hopeless, we think; the lady's studied politeness, of which you complain, is fatal; for women never assume that studied severity (as it really is) of demeanour except to those whom they greatly dislike.

MORON.—Take four ounces of sarsaparilla root, slice it down, put the slices into four pints of water, and simmer for four hours. Then take out the root and beat it into a mash; put it into the liquor again, and boil down to two pints, then strain and cool. Take a wineglassful three times a day.

ANY.—There is no reason why balls and dress parties should not be given at farmhouses; provided always, as the lawyers say, the ways and means are sufficiently adequate. There is no harm in such social pleasures; and although we do not quite agree with the poet, there is nevertheless much reason in his rhyme when he declares that

"Pleasure's the only noble end

To which all human powers should tend;

And virtue gives little room, for ambition's tent,

But to make pleasure as a pleasure's tent,

Wisdom and the were both designed

To make the senses more refined,

That man might revel free from cloying,

Then most a sage when most enjoying."

C. C. J.—Accustom your children to a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. If a thing happened at one window, and they in relating it say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; for you do not know where deviation from truth will end.

LIZZIE, EDITH, and FLORA, three cousins, wish to correspond matrimonially with three gentlemen. "Lizzie" is tall, has dark wavy hair, blue eyes, fresh colour, and fair complexion. "Edith" has dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, is of middle height, and slightly inclined to *embonpoint*. "Flora" has fair hair and eyes, is rather tall, with fair complexion, and slight colour.

HOW TO BE HAPPY.

In a cottage I live, and the cot of content,
Where a few little flowers, for ambition too low,
Are furnished as plain as a pariah's tent.

With all for convenience, but nothing for show;
Like Robinson Crusoe's, both peaceful and pleasant,
By industry stor'd, like the hive of a bee;
And the peer who looks down with contempt on a peasant,
Can ne'er be look'd up to with envy by me.

And when from the brow of a neighbouring hill,
On the murmuring stream and the clack of the mill,
I refer to the murmur and clack of the town,
As births as in youth, when I danced on the green,
I disdain to rejoice at my looks growing grey;
Thus the autumn of life, like the springtide serene,
Makes approaching December as cheerful as May.

I lie down with the lamb, and I rise with the lark,
So I keep both disease and the doctor at bay;
And I feel on my pillow no thorns in the dark,
Which reflection might raise from the deeds of the day;
For, with neither myself nor my neighbour at strife,
Though the sand in my glass may not long have to run,
I'm determin'd to live all the days of my life,
With content in a cottage and envy to none!

Thus while a mad world is involv'd in mad broils,
For a few leagues of land or an arm of the sea;
And ambition climbs high and pale penury toils,
For what but appears a mere phantom to me;
Through life let me steer with an even clear hand,
And a heart unscorched by grandeur or gold;
And, at last, quit my berth, when this life's at a stand,
For a berth which can neither be bought nor sold.

R. M. is a bachelor "lonely and sad," he says, and wishes to make the acquaintance of some nice young lady, with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, of dark complexion, and considered tolerably good-looking; has an income of £150 per annum, and would prefer a Yorkshire lady to share it with him.

ST. PIERRE.—The Christian religion alone views the conjugal union as in the proper order of nature; it is the only religion which presents man to woman as a companion; every other system yields her to him as his slave. To this religion alone do European women owe the liberty they enjoy; and from the liberty of woman, it may not be too much to assert, the liberty of the European nations has chiefly flowed.

LOVELY WILLIE, a jocosely bachelor of Bucks, desires us to notify that he is just twenty years of age, and, as he describes himself, is not very ugly, not very handsome, not very tall, not very short, not very rich, not very poor; but is very fond of home, very cheerful, very affectionate, and will be very disconsolate until he succeeds in getting a very nice little wife, good, gentle, loving, and true, with golden, wavy hair, and blue eyes.

MINNIE GREY.—We have more than once expressed the opinion that it is very hazardous—to say the least—for a young woman to emigrate alone to either of the colonies. But there is nothing wrong in the desire to do so; and if after you have well weighed the matter, you are resolved to take the step, an application to Her Majesty's Commissioners for Emigration will be the best course to follow. (Personal appearance we should consider prepossessing; colour of hair, dark brown.)

MATERFAMILIAS.—Tea is adulterated with leaves of the sycamore, horse-chestnut, and plum; with lie tea, which is made up of tea dust, sand, and gum, to give it consistency; also with leaves of the beech, bastard plane, elm, poplar, willow, fancy oak, hawthorn, and sile. It is coloured with black lead, rose pink, Dutch pink, vegetable red and yellow dyes, arsenite of copper, chromate and bichromate of potash. Green teas are more adulterated than black. They are coloured with Prussian blue, turmeric, Chinese yellow, &c., flavoured with sulphate of iron, catechu gum, la vena beno, and Chinese botanical powder. Tea-leaves that have been once used are collected, "doctor'd," and again sold as fresh tea. Obtain some genuine leaves of tea, moisten them, and

lay them out with gum upon paper. Press them between the leaves of books until dry. When you suspect a sample of tea, damp and unroll the leaves, and gum and dry them as the genuine ones—you will then be able by comparison to detect the adulteration.

B. H. C.—"Tuffy" is a corruption of the name of David, a famous Welsh bishop or saint, and the word has come to signify the ideal of a Welshman; "Paddy" is generally believed to be a variation of Patrick (the name of the patron saint of Ireland) although it is probably derived in reality from St. Palladius, the precursor of St. Patrick. "Sandy" is of course the universal Scotchman, and the word is very likely derived from Alexander, the name of some bishop or king; but who he was in particular we cannot say.

R. JORCE.—We really cannot tell you how you are to avoid purchasing adulterated articles of food, and being imposed on. We can, however, afford you a few hints which may be useful, viz.: to grind your own wheat, if possible, and make your bread at home; avoid green pickles (that is, pickles artificially raised to a very bright green); and also bright red peppers, spices and sauces; purchase your spirits and beer of large dealers and brewers; avoid coloured confectionery, and, finally, weigh and measure what you order when it is brought home.

J. G. F.—To extract grease-spots from books or paper, gently warm the greased or spotted part of the book or paper, and then press upon it a few leaves of blotting paper, one after the other, so as to absorb as much of the grease as possible. Have ready some fine clear essential oil of turpentine, heated almost to a boiling state, warm the greased part a little, and then with a soft clean brush apply it to both sides; a repetition of this process will extract the grease; and the application, by means of another brush, of a little rectified spirits of wine, will remove all appearance of the grease.

ECMO.—The question which you propound is very like a dilemma. The gentleman certainly evinces prudent forethought in not wishing to be married until his position improves; and as he expects a few years will place him in better circumstances, his desire to postpone marriage until then is reasonable. But as regards the disparity in age—does not, of course, be altered in any way, and therefore cannot weigh as an objection in the future more than at present. We advise an explicit understanding respecting the strength of the affection on either side; and then if both are satisfied, to wait for the two or three years to expire.

EDWARD P.—No, drinking fountains are not a modern "notion." It is related of Edwin, who became king of the district between the Firth of Forth and the Humber in 616, rose to the name of Bretwalda, and in 633 was killed in battle by Ceadwalla, King of the British, that he established these conveniences for the thirsty traveller. Bede tells us that "in many places where clear springs ran by public highways, and where men's faring was most, there he had for refreshment of wayfarers to set pots, and to hang thereon brazen basins. Nor did any touch them but for his needful service, either out of awe or out of love of that king."

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"Lonely Anne" would like to correspond matrimonially with "Adolph." Was twenty last birthday, is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, has dark auburn hair, fair complexion, and slight colour; is of an amiable, affectionate disposition and domesticated, and will exchange *cartes*.—"Orion" offers himself to "Lonely Emma." Is a student in a training college; 21 years of age, height 5 ft. 8 in, light complexion and whiskers, with blue eyes.—"Marion II." has been attracted by the appeal of "George W." of whom she would be pleased to hear further particulars. Is the daughter of a highly respectable tradesman, has received a good education, can play and sing very well, and is also thoroughly acquainted with domestic affairs. In personal appearance is of rather commanding figure, with a pleasant face; is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, with small features, fair complexion, rosy, dimpled cheeks, dark grey eyes, brown hair, and dark, arched eyebrows; is 19 years of age, and although not rich, will not be puerile.—"Laura E." will be glad to open a correspondence with "Edward W." who says that he wants a loving wife.—"Laura" is 18 years of age, tall and fair, with light brown hair—"Violet" would be happy to correspond with "George D." She is fair, has blue eyes, rosy cheeks, auburn hair; is about 5 ft. 3 in. in height, and would make a most loving wife—"Rhoda," who is just 18, 5 ft. 11 in. in height, with light blue eyes, light brown hair, lively disposition, and thoroughly domesticated, requests to hear further from "George D." with whose proposed two years' courtship she would be perfectly satisfied.—"Grace G." acknowledges the reply of "Geo. C.S." and would be happy to hear further from him—"M. M." would like to correspond with "A.R.C." Is of lively disposition, of business habits; has brown hair, and a loving heart—"Eva Harris" is delighted with the description "Charles Stuart" gives of himself, and would be most happy to correspond with him. She is 20 years of age, rather pretty, very amiable, and would endeavour to make him a loving and dutiful wife—"J. T." will be happy to correspond with "Mary Brown" with a view to matrimony, and desires an exchange of *cartes*. Is 6 ft. in height, 30 years of age, has dark brown hair, and is good-looking; is in a respectable position, and trusts "M.R." is domesticated—"Lily of the Valley" (who is an orphan) for some time longed to meet with such an unselfish being as "A.R.C." in whom she could confide. She is 25 years of age, considered nicely looking and amiable, with a very loving heart; she is also free from any engagement, and would be most happy to correspond matrimonially.

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